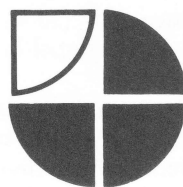


MISSION FOCUS



Conversion in Acts: Implications for Witness to Religions

CALVIN E. SHENK

Acts records the apostles' witness to the gospel of the kingdom in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. This was carried out through the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Those who witnessed in multiple cultural and social contexts were flexible, adapting the message to specific audiences. But there was a common theme in that witness: Jesus Christ is Lord, and all were invited to convert to him. No one was excluded from this invitation.

Biblical perspectives of conversion

Conversion in Acts was characterized by common motifs expressed in sermons, encounters, and responses. Conversion was motivated by a sense of sinfulness, the need for repentance, and the desire to receive forgiveness. This message was shared with Jews gathered at Pentecost (2:38), with Jews who criticized the healing of the lame man at the temple in Jerusalem (3:19), with Jews in the dispersion (13:38), with Simon at Samaria (8:22) with Cornelius, the God-fearing Gentile (10:43), with "pagan" Gentiles at Lystra (14:15), with sophisticated religious Gentiles at Athens (17:30), and with Jews and Greeks in Ephesus (20:21).

Meaning and results

One who repents of sin and believes in Jesus Christ for forgiveness **turns** to the Lord. The Greek words *epistrephein*, *strephein*, and *metanoein* and the Hebrew word *shubh* mean "to turn." Gabriel Fackre describes conversion as "an about-face, a reorientation, a change of direction, a fresh tack . . . a threshold commitment, a new posture, a new attitude for the journey to follow, a new beginning" (Fackre, 1975:80). Dean Gilliland holds that "conversion refers to an abrupt or a gradual change in which a person's life is redirected, loyalties are revised and values are reappraised. It does not imply a complete understanding of the new faith, but marks a new beginning" (Gilliland, 1983:71-72).

At Pentecost repentance was followed by **turning** (Acts 3:19). At Antioch people believed and **turned** to the Lord (11:21). At Lystra Paul urged the "pagan" Gentiles to "**turn** from these vain things to a living God" (14:15). At Jerusalem James urged Jewish Christians not to create unnecessary difficulties for "those of the Gentiles who **turn** to God" (15:19). Paul accepted

his call to ministry among the Gentiles "to open their eyes, that they might **turn** from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God" (26:18).

The invitation to convert to Jesus Christ was contextualized according to the background of the hearers. Jews were introduced to Jesus who stood in continuity with the Old Testament, whereas Gentiles were introduced to him without benefit of Jewish history. But the common theme for Jews and Gentiles was Jesus Christ, especially his resurrection. Jews heard this at Pentecost (Acts 2:32-33). Peter and John preached the resurrection to the crowd that puzzled over the healing of the lame man (3:15) and to the Sanhedrin that tried them because of this event (4:10). Resurrection was a significant issue in later sermons to Jews. The resurrection of Jesus was part of the message to Cornelius (10:40) and was a cause of stumbling to the Gentiles at Athens (17:30-31). Because of the resurrection, Jesus was the living Lord to whom one could turn. Resurrection was the center. It was the fulcrum upon which the past and the future rested. This distinguished Christian faith from all other religions. Conversion was not to a system of doctrine but to a person. Christian faith thus begins where other religions end—with the resurrection.

Conversion resulted in changed behavior. An outstanding example of change was Saul's conversion (Acts 9). Add to this the experience of the Philippian jailer who washed Paul's wounds (16:33) and the Ephesians who destroyed their paraphernalia (19:18-19). The religious experience of conversion is inseparably bound with ethics. Obedience confirms experience. Paul's understanding of such wholeness of conversion is perhaps best expressed in his statement before King Agrippa: "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of their repentance" (26:19-20).

Conversion was effected by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Every initiative in evangelism is with the empowering of the Holy Spirit—Pentecost (Acts 2), Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (4), Stephen's witness (6-7), Philip's witness to the Samaritans and to the Ethiopian (8), events of Paul's conversion (9), Peter's encounter with Cornelius, and Paul's mission from Antioch (13ff.). People were led in witness by the Holy Spirit, and those who were converted received forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit. The Word of God was the primary agent under the Spirit for conversion. In Jerusalem those "who heard the word believed" (4:4). On another occasion "the word of God

increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly" (6:7). As a result of Philip's preaching, people at Samaria "received the word of God" (4:14). When Peter was with Cornelius "the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word" (10:44). The Word of God was crucial in the spread of the gospel beyond Antioch (13:7, 44, 48-49).

Conversion involves personal and social dimensions. In conversion personal experience and personal story are related to the Christian story. Those who were converted were baptized and linked with an existing community (Acts 2:42-47). They were "added to the Lord" (5:14; 11:24) and to his body. Conversion is personal, but it is kept from being individualistic as people become part of the community. Paul's conversion was personal—light, voice, dialogue—but Ananias and Barnabas helped him become part of the church. Conversion is the start of a dynamic process of following in "the Way" (9:2, 19:19, 23; 22:4) with others.

Variety of ways of conversion

While there are constants, one cannot stereotype the language or experience of conversion. In Christian history some religious leaders or groups have held rigid demands for a particular form of conversion as the only valid experience of salvation. Beverly Roberts Gaventa (1982) suggests that we ought to give more attention to conversion narratives in Acts rather than to conversion language. In Acts 8-10 are three conversion stories, each more dynamic and complicated than the one before. They do not conform to a consistent pattern, and they are not ends in themselves. Gaventa believes these stories have significance beyond themselves. Conversion of the Ethiopian indicates that foreigners and eunuchs can be included among God's people. Paul's conversion suggests that even the enemy can be saved; a persecutor can become a proclaimer. Cornelius represents all Gentiles, and his conversion is related to the conversion of Peter.

There are, however, common themes. Conversion comes from God. An angel and the Spirit direct Philip to the Ethiopian. Paul is confronted by Christ, and Ananias is led to Paul to complete his conversion. Peter and Cornelius each have a vision from God.

Another common theme is that none of these conversions is a private matter. Philip brings the Ethiopian to baptism; Ananias welcomes Paul and connects him with the church at Damascus and Jerusalem. Peter helps Cornelius and his household (Gaventa, 1982:420-22).

Clearly there is a wide range of ways in which conversion is made evident in the lives of people. There is not just one type or one norm. Acts 16 describes three conversions at Philippi. Lydia was converted as "the Lord opened her heart" (16:14). When the slave girl with the spirit of divination met Paul, he was annoyed and said to the spirit, "I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her" (16:18). The jailer, trembling with fear, fell down before Paul and Silas and asked, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" He believed, washed their wounds, was baptized, gave them food, and saw his household become believers (16:25-34).

There were individual conversions such as the Ethiopian and Paul, but there were also group conversions at Pentecost (Acts 2:41) and from the witness of the Jerusalem church (4:4). A group responded to Philip's preaching in Samaria (8:12), and the households of Cornelius (11:14), Lydia (16:15), and the Philippian jailer (16:33) believed.

Conversion is unique for particular people at various times and places. It is experienced differently. Acts does not glorify the convert or praise the religious experience. Those of us who work in cross-cultural situations are aware of differences in how

conversion is experienced. The precipitating factors to conversion—how release is experienced, what one turns from, whether it is gradual or sudden, traumatic or calm, individualized or group—will differ. The core elements in conversion involve confrontation with God, a radical change of life direction, and authentic newness. We need to open ourselves to the richness and complexity of conversion experiences.

Acts does not insist on stereotyped conversion experience, but it does insist on conversion. Jews, proselytes, Samaritans, God-fearers, and Gentiles—whether rural pagans (Lystra), sophisticated philosophers of religion (Athens), or idolaters and occultists (Ephesus)—are asked to repent and turn. The gospel is not added to other commitments; it replaces those commitments.

Conversion and the religions

Inviting people to convert was not easy. Michael Green (1970) explains why conversion was foreign to the mentality of the Greco-Roman world.

First, Hellenistic religion did not require belief, so long as the traditional sacrifices were offered. One did not need to believe in the deities one worshiped, but the sacrifices were necessary for the well-being of the state and the safety of society.

Second, in the Hellenistic world, ethics were not a necessary part of religion. Ritual purity was important, but one was not

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asked to break with the past or renounce wrong. Some exception to this is seen in the philosophers (e.g., Stoics, Cynics) who insisted on ethics as a corrective to the license of the times. But there was uncertainty and moral inconsistency in the best of them.

Third, it was difficult for Hellenistic humans to understand the exclusive demands Christian faith made. Christians were expected to be completely committed to Jesus. For them there was no other lord, neither emperor nor pagan deity. Hellenistic religion was never exclusive. One could belong to one of the religions, perform ancestral worship, and do obeisance at an imperial shrine, all at the same time. The options were many—mystery religions, magic, astrology, gnosis, philosophy. Allegiance to one did not supplant the other but supplemented it. Syncretism was the mood.

The uniqueness of Christian conversion stands out in this context. Christian faith went further. There was to be exclusive commitment to Jesus and to the company of his people. Jews and Gentiles were invited to take this step. Gentiles needed to be converted to a new faith. To some extent Jews were converted within the faith in which they were nourished. Christ then became the goal and summit for the Jews. But the shock for Jews was as great or greater than for the Gentiles who could not depend upon birth or circumcision. Both Jews and Gentiles were baptized into the church (Green, 1970:144-147). The moral and intellectual challenge of Christian faith combined to win converts as people were delivered and transformed and as they found truth in Jesus.

If Paul called upon people at Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, and the Gentiles to “repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of their repentance” (Acts 26:20), can we do less? Paul’s message was authentic and also more threatening because he spoke out of his own conversion. The invitation to conversion was to the Jew and Gentile. We need to ponder this at a time when some are suggesting that there are two alternate covenants in the Bible, one for the salvation of Jews and one for the salvation of Gentiles. Have we forgotten that it was to Jewish leaders that Peter declared, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (4:12)? Or have we failed to read the numerous sermons to Jews? Why was Paul so keen to contact synagogues in the cities to which he went? Acts declares that Jesus is for all, Jews and Gentiles.

To invite people to turn to Jesus is not to deny the validity of some insight in other religions. This is obvious in Judaism, which is a unique preparation for the Messiah, as sermons to Jewish audiences indicate. But it is also true of other religions. Paul recognized religious awareness of the rural pagan Gentiles at Lystra (Acts 14:8-19) even if they were worshipers of Zeus and Hermes. They could observe the witness of God in creation and the cycles of nature. At Athens (17:16-34) in a more sophisticated religious-philosophical environment Paul both affirmed and connected with the religious sensitivity that they had, by referring to the “unknown God” and their being “very religious.” He interacted seriously with the Stoics and Epicureans. He extended their understanding of who God is.

From Lystra and Athens we learn the importance of assessing one’s hearers, acknowledging correct understanding already present, and addressing the issues. Paul showed appreciation for the truth the gospel had in common with their culture. He did not discount that truth or exaggerate it. He did not overromanticize the beauty of other religions. He had a clear position; he was grasped by Jesus Christ. He was bold but not arrogant or sarcastic. He did not ridicule. Though respectful and gentle, he clearly rejected their idolatry. He invited them to conversion. Lystra was told “to turn from vain things.” At

Athens he said God does not live in shrines, nor is he served by gold, silver, stone, or the art and imagination of humans. Ignorance must therefore give way to repentance. Paul did not bless them as they were, nor did he call for a synthesis of Christian faith and “pagan” religion. Christian faith was more than one more theory of religion or ethical system. It was more than following the example of a new teacher. Christian faith was an invitation to convert from the past to Jesus.

We need to find a balance between joyful recognition of the insights that people have and the need for turning to Jesus. In addition to Acts 14 and 17 one can note John 1 and Romans 1 and 2. John recognized the light of the *lógos* which brings understanding but that understanding in itself is not complete. The *lógos* needed to become flesh. Romans 1 and 2 clearly recognize the knowledge people have of God through creation and conscience, but even that knowledge has been exchanged and suppressed. Knowledge in itself is not sufficient for salvation. These passages are in the context of Romans 1:16 where Paul declares his confidence in the gospel as the power of God for salvation to those who have faith, both Jews and Gentiles. In the past we frequently emphasized the uniqueness of Christ by denying or depreciating the truth in other religions. Today we sometimes over-idealize the good in other religions and waver in our conviction about the once-for-all-ness of Jesus Christ. At that point we doubt the significance of conversion.

Contemporary issues relating to conversion

Practice and belief

Some object to conversion, insisting that we ought to recognize the good in every person. This reaction is understandable, given our disillusionment with organized Christianity. We should certainly recognize all goodness. To deny such goodness is to deny the image of God, the religious quest, God’s action in nature and history, and perhaps even the drawing of the Spirit. Allegiance to Christ does not mean we deny goodness in other religions; we test such goodness by the word made flesh.

Yet not everything is good, kind, or beautiful. There is spirituality and superstition, search for God and flight from God, beauty and ugliness. Religion is positive and negative, creative and destructive, true and false. It can be both a stepping-stone to faith and a stumbling block. As we acknowledge goodness, let us not forget that in the Bible goodness is never the basis for salvation. Conversion is necessary not because of our goodness but because of our lack of goodness.

Closely akin to this idea is the argument that we should understand people by their practice and not by their belief. We are fond of saying that “Christian faith is not what we believe but what we do” and that we should be concerned for orthopraxy, not mere orthodoxy. There is truth in this perspective. It is a needed corrective to some theology. But it is also a partial truth, for the two cannot be separated. Practice and belief are always held together in the New Testament. Are all who do Christlike things Christian, regardless of what they believe? Does faith not also include receiving the gift of forgiveness on the basis of what **Christ has done** for us?

For example, are we honest with the New Testament when we quickly “baptize” Gandhi on the basis of his behavior and forget that he said, “Christ is lord, but not a solitary lord” and “I cannot ascribe exclusive divinity to Jesus . . . He is as divine as Krishna, Rama, Mohammed, or Zoroaster”? Conversion to Christ is more than doing good things. Michael Green insists that “once the fundamental root of conversion to Christ is severed from the Christian message, it becomes a broken lifeless plant, however beautiful the flowers of Christian concern and social involvement it displays” (Green, 1970:148). How unfortunate that some stress conversion and have forgotten its

goal and others have emphasized action and have not linked it with other dimensions of conversion.

Negative associations

In the minds of some, conversion is associated with manipulation, emotionalism, naivete, and code words. Where this has occurred, conversion is prostituted. Conversion may never exploit. The apostles did not make hasty, ill-conceived appeals for decision. In Paul's conversion there are emotional, intellectual, and volitional elements; the objective and the subjective combined to produce transformation. Paul later appealed to his audiences to convert to Jesus Christ, but the appeal was careful, reasoned, and patient. He talked with Jewish theologians at the synagogue, with Felix and Agrippa, and with people in the marketplace and Hall of Tyrannus. Abuse of conversion does not invalidate conversion; it demands more clarity in understanding and practice.

Others associate conversion with triumphalism, arrogance, and crusading. We acknowledge with regret that Western Christians have wrongfully used the triumph of Christ to be triumphalistic in calling people to conversion. Christ has been associated with Anglo-American imperialism, with ruling ideologies and elites, and with race and class. This causes us pain and embarrassment because conversion has been distorted.

One response to this dilemma is to suggest that we ourselves need to be converted. This takes numerous forms—conversion to the oppressed, conversion to the poor, conversion to the world. Conversion in this sense is used for consciousness raising, which leads to insight, commitment, and transformation. This is indeed necessary. Who can suggest to South African blacks that white South African Christians do not need to be converted before inviting blacks to be converted? The example of Peter and Cornelius is instructive. It reminds us to share the Christian faith and not our own brand of Christianity. It prepares us for judgment and correction as we witness. This happened when Peter met Cornelius. He was converted in the process of the conversion of Cornelius. His understanding of Christian faith and his attitudes were changed. This is an essential correction to our overconfidence.

But some overcorrect and go to another extreme. Their regret for the past immobilizes them so that they are either uncertain about faith or embarrassed to invite people to convert to Jesus. Lesslie Newbigin argues that what is said "about the conversion of Peter must not be used to overshadow the conversion of Cornelius, without which there would have been no conversion of Peter" (Newbigin, 1978:211). This new definition of conversion is helpful, so long as it does not displace the earlier meaning of conversion. Can we hold both meanings together? I am reluctant to define conversion in a way that disassociates it from its earlier more traditional meaning or hesitates to acknowledge that the oppressed and poor also need conversion. In Philippi the slave girl (oppressed) and the jailer (oppressor) were converted.

Given the history of Western dominance, Christians have sometimes reinterpreted witness because certain forms of witness seem too close to arrogance. Some people suggest that one who witnesses acts superior, especially if one believes in conversion. Such people object to the power connotation of "proclaiming the good news" or even "sharing good news." They prefer to "exchange good news." While the spirit of this communication is to be applauded, one must ask how the good news is defined. In encounter with other religions we exchange ideas and experiences, but what is the good news we exchange? Certainly where there is knowledge of Christ we exchange good news. But where such knowledge is lacking, is what we ex-

change good news as defined by Acts? Is it not necessary for the believer then to "share good news"? Such witness is not **against** people but **for** people, assuming that the manner of witness is appropriate.

In our efforts to correct the mistakes of mission, it is important to identify whether the problem has been the message, our understanding of the message, or the manner of presentation. Our fallenness and finitude demands modesty and humility. Our convictions must be expressed with respect and reverence. But this does not mean that we minimize conversion. We are not in a position to surrender that which is not ours.

Dialogue

The question is often asked whether it is possible to believe in dialogue with other religions and still believe in conversion. Many people suggest that the nature and spirit of dialogue are destroyed if either of the parties wants to convert the other. They accept dialogue as simply a matter of sharing, getting to know one another, and gaining a new understanding of the respective faiths. These are important goals for dialogue which should not be discounted. But dialogue in Acts is part of witness. It was not only for understanding and friendship. Christ was not excluded from the dialogue. If Christian faith were simply ideas, dialogue about similar and contrasting ideas would be a sufficient goal in itself.

But it is impossible to talk about Christian faith without speaking of Christ. We are not merely inviting people to accept better ideas, a dogmatic system, a sociocultural code, or one's personal views. We are inviting them to consider Christ. We are not threatened by what dialogue includes but by what it excludes. To delete the possibility of conversion in dialogue is not consistent with the apostles in Acts. To exclude Christ or the possibility of conversion would be to stand in the way of Christ drawing people to himself. Conversion is not what we do to people; it is what happens when they meet Christ. We do not argue them into conversion. But they may be motivated by the contagion of faith kindling faith.

Acts makes it clear that other religions need to hear of Jesus Christ. W. A. Visser't Hooft wrote, "The Church does not apologize for the fact that it wants all men to know Jesus Christ and to follow him . . . whether people have a high, low or a primitive religion, whether they have sublime ideals or a defective morality makes no fundamental difference in this respect. All must hear the Gospel" (Visser't Hooft, 1963:116).

Conversion: integral to mission

The only way to know Jesus Christ and to follow him is to be converted. If we remove conversion from mission we have destroyed the only means by which people come to Christ. David Bosch writes that

to surrender conversion as the ultimate goal is, therefore, not a consequence of modesty but of false modesty. If, in anxiety to avoid spiritual arrogance, or in striving after solidarity with others, we should begin to "demonize," we would rob salt of its savour or put the lamp under a mealtub. The surrender of conversion would . . . land us in a totally other spiritual climate than that of the New Testament (Bosch, 1977:210-11).

Inviting people to conversion is not arrogance, but the way in which inviting is done can be. Conversion is an invitation to turn and receive forgiveness. This invitation may never be given in contempt. Conversion is possible because of Christ's love. Announcing its possibility must also be an act of love, not condemnation, as we remember Newbigin's remark that we are on the witness stand, not on the judgment seat.

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The Japanese Church Faces Militarism and Violence— A Historical Perspective

KEN JOHNSON SHENK

This paper traces throughout Japanese church history the stance of the church toward trends and institutions within Japan that justified the use of military force for various reasons.

The Kirishitan Era

They prize and honor all that has to do with war, and there is nothing of which they are so proud as of weapons adorned with gold and silver. They always wear swords and daggers, both in and out of the house, and when they go to sleep they hang them at the bed's head. In short, they value arms more than any people I have ever seen (Perrin, 1980:8).

These were the words of Francis Xavier after spending the years of 1549-1551 in Japan as the first Western missionary there. Xavier was describing the people of a nation divided into countless domains which continually fought among themselves for more land to control. The warrior class in Japan at that time amounted to an estimated 7 to 10 percent of the entire population, a high number compared to the less than one percent in Europe (Perrin:33).

Jesuit missionaries first targeted their message of the Christian faith to the influential people of this fragmented society. One might think that those leaders who were converted came to renounce their former ways of depending on violence. Yet this was not to happen. On the contrary, the missionaries were not inclined to preach the gospel of peace and reconciliation.

Though the missionaries evidently commanded respect for their moral character (Drummond, 1971:54), they also gained respect for the political and economic power they could help mobilize in favor of friendly political leaders. Powerful Oda Nobunaga himself welcomed the Jesuits (Lee, 1966:62). He shared with them a common hatred for the Buddhists who were allied against Nobunaga. Nobunaga granted protection to the Roman Catholics, since their iconoclastic crusades against the Buddhists were accomplishing his own goals of weakening the opposition. The missionaries were already giving tacit approval to their converts to burn or destroy Buddhist temples and kill

their priests (Drummond:78f.). Thus in 1571 the missionaries and their disciples were in no position to criticize Nobunaga when he carried out his own attack against Buddhist enemies. His forces killed 3,000 monks and villagers caught in the attack (Drummond:74).

Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Nobunaga's successor as unifier of Japan, also strove to take advantage of the growing power of the Christians. In 1586 Hideyoshi told Jesuit Vice-Provincial Father Coelho of his plans to conquer Kyushu, Korea, and even China. If Coelho would arrange to charter for him two large Portuguese ships for the invasion, Hideyoshi hinted that he would have churches built throughout China and would order the people to become converted. Coelho responded with glee, offering to provide as many ships as possible. As for the plans to conquer Kyushu, he promised to enlist the help of Christian *daimyo* there for Hideyoshi's cause (Lee:63). The plan was never to be implemented, as Hideyoshi made an about-face in his attitude toward the Jesuits. The following year he issued an edict of expulsion against the Jesuits. This move no doubt came as Hideyoshi came to realize the danger that a united band of Christian *daimyo* could spell if they ever decided to turn against him. In fact, Coelho unsuccessfully strove to drum up support for armed resistance against the edict, though Valiano, his superior, was against such a move (Drummond: 78-82). As it happened, the edict was not to be enforced for a number of years.

Suspicious toward the missionaries and the Kirishitan erupted once and for all in 1596 when the captain of the Spanish ship *San Felipe* bragged to Japanese officials about Spain's power and its patterns of conquering countries by joining hands with native Christians. When Hideyoshi caught wind of this, he responded by publicly humiliating and crucifying six Spanish Franciscans, a Japanese Jesuit brother, and nineteen other Japanese converts (Lee:68; Laman, 1982:94-141).

By the early seventeenth century, reunified Japan was convinced that the Westerners and their religion were harmful to national security. Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu learned from an envoy sent to Europe that the church and state there do in fact work together to conquer non-Christian lands (Lee:70). Thus missionaries were eventually expelled, and believers were forced to recant or face death or torture. Thousands chose death rather than recantation.

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In 1637, 37,000 commoners in Shimabara took up arms in protest against the cruel system of forced taxation. Identifying their cause as Christian, and many of them were, the peasants gathered at the old Hara castle under banners with inscriptions such as "Praised be the most holy sacrament" (Lee:75). A song sung by these Kirishitan rebels went like this:

*While powder and shot remain,
Continue to chase the besieging army
That is blown away before us
Like the drifting sand.
Hear the dull thud of the enemies guns: Don! Don!
Our arms give back the reply,
"By the blessing of God the Father,
I will cut off your heads!"* (Perrin:65f.)

The rebels managed to kill thousands of government soldiers, but in the end of the four-month seige, only 100 of the 37,000 rebel men, women, and children survived. The Shimabara Uprising left an indelible impression in the minds of the Japanese that Christians were violent subversives who were a threat to the Japanese nation (Lee:75).

The Meiji Era

In 1853 Japan was rudely awakened from its two centuries of self-imposed isolation from the rest of the world. Impressed with the "black ships" of Commodore Perry, the Japanese were aroused into building a modernized military force. Under the slogans of *fukoku kyohei* (Rich country, strong military) and *datsu-a nyu-o* (away from Asia, enter Europe), Japan looked to the West to learn how it could become a strong nation, able to renegotiate unequal treaties with the West. Within fifty years, Japan was to shock the world by scoring military victories over both China and Russia. Its dream of catching up with the West was further realized by the 1902 treaty of alliance with Britain.

As they sought to learn from the West, it was only natural that some students and intellectuals welcomed opportunities to learn from Christian missionaries who began arriving in 1859. Many of these early inquirers were samurai, the warrior-class people who lost their privileged status after the 1868 Meiji Restoration. These samurai were looking for a spiritual-moral basis that would support their quest for modernization. Interpreting Christianity as the basis for Western progress, they adopted the missionaries' religion for themselves and for the sake of Japan (Dohi, 1980:32, 44). Writing about his own conversion experience, Honda Yoichi stated, "I came to believe in Christianity for the sake of my country" (Dohi:91; my translation).

Honda's type of nationalistic faith was of course not unique to Japanese ex-samurai. The whites in the United States at that time were proceeding to conquer Native Americans with the support of church leaders who sanctioned expansionism as America's God-given manifest destiny. In the best-selling book, *Our Country* (1885), Josiah Strong approved of U.S. territorial expansions as a predestined trend that God was using to evangelize unsaved peoples (Dohi:31f.). It should thus not be surprising that the converts of American missionaries would harbor their own Japanese versions of ethnocentrism that would theologially justify Japanese imperialism in the decades to come.

In 1889 the Meiji constitution was promulgated. In the following year, the Imperial Rescript on Education (*kyoiku chokugo*) was instituted. The constitution declared the emperor to be an absolute sovereign in the line of emperors going back to Jimmu Tenno, a direct descendant of Amaterasu Omikami, the Sun Goddess in Shinto mythology. The Rescript on Education glorified filial piety (*ko*) and *chukun aikoku* (loyalty and patriotism or devotion to state interests) as the citizens' most important duties. With these documents Japan was to live

under institutionalized absolutism for over fifty years.

Even nationalistic Christians were scandalized by these assertions. When Uchimura Kanzo, a young Christian teacher, disobeyed an order to worship the imperial portrait, Rescript and Signature, the issue came to national attention. Uchimura was widely attacked as an enemy of the nation and was forced to resign from his teaching position. He was to apologize eventually for his momentary hesitation to bow, sending a friend to bow in his stead (Young, 1958:48). When church leader Uemura Masahisa heard that Uchimura had reversed his stance, he wrote in his *Fukuin Shuho* magazine about the need for Christians to stand steadfastly against such idolatrous behavior. The government responded by shutting down publication of Uemura's magazine (Morioka and Kasahara, 1974:120).

During the next two years, critics of Christianity claimed the incompatibility of the Christian faith with the aims of the Rescript on Education. Church leaders responded by arguing that Christianity not only teaches patriotic loyalty to the emperor (Yokoi Tokio, Honda Yoichi) but that it is the supreme basis for loyal subjection to the state (Uchimura, Uemura and Kashiwagi Gien). Meanwhile Christians generally learned to justify their bows to the imperial portrait and the Rescript as an act of respect, not worship (Dohi:114-17).

Three years after the Uchimura controversy, Japan was at war with China over the fate of Korea. Uchimura immediately wrote and published his "Justification of the Korean War." He defended Japan's right to fight a righteous war as Christian nations had done in the past. Uchimura portrayed Japan as a benevolent neighbor interceding on behalf of the Korean people against the backward rule of that nation by China. Japan was sacrificing itself in a "spirit of chivalry" to ensure that Korea would be protected from future domination by the West (Howes, 1978:100f.).

Japan was not without Christian pacifists in the 1890s. Influenced by Quaker missionaries, Kitamura Tokoku and Kato Manji were motivated into forming Japan's first peace society in 1889 after hearing a speech by William Jones of the British Peace Society. In its five years of existence, the *Nihon Heiwa Kai* expounded on the theological bases for Christian pacifism and the danger of narrow nationalism and zealous militarism (Sumiya, 1983:99-104; Bamba, 1978:55-62). Thus the wider church was to get its first exposure to pacifist teaching. But the mood of the nation and the church continued its drift toward support of the impending war against China.

Since the great majority of Christians felt a great sense of allegiance to the emperor, they accepted the government's call to contribute to the war effort. Few questioned the claim that the war was for peace and for the empire's glory. Church members joined Christian organizations that supported the war cause in various ways. Honda Yoichi, as head of one such group in Tokyo, the *Kirisutokyo Doshikai*, praised the soldiers as Christlike for sacrificing their lives for the sake of the empire (Dohi:124f.). War fervor was so high that the *Nihon Heiwa Kai* disbanded and the majority of Japanese Quakers cast their lot in favor of war (Sumiya:104f.).

Victory in the Sino-Japanese war led to euphoria in Japan. China had been forced to cede Taiwan to Japan, and Japan was thrust into the international limelight as a powerful new force. The nation learned that aggression paid handsome rewards (Howes:17). But Uchimura reacted differently. Learning of the ruthlessness of Japan's military, he wrote, "[The Japanese soldiers in China] think of killing soldiers in terms of a wild boar hunt. If the Japanese are men of benevolence and righteousness, why do they not respect the honor of the Chinese?" With shame he had come to realize that "the righteous war was concluded unrighteously" (Howes:102).

In the summer of 1903, seven professors at the University of Tokyo publicly urged the government to attack Russia before it could consolidate its strength in Manchuria (Howes:19). In a matter of months, Japan was again at war. The church's stance again was supportive for the most part. The Fukuin Domei kai immediately urged churches to hold prayer meetings in support of the war effort. Church leaders Honda Yoishi and Ibuka Kajinosuke defended the war as just during their travels in the West (Dohi:212f.). Uemura Masahisa supported the war as a war between a constitutional state and a military dictatorship (Dohi:213). Yet he expressed concern that Japan would become dangerously arrogant in the event of a victory (Oh, 1968:119).

A minority did stand against Japan's role in the war. Already before the war, Christian pacifists were urging restraint. Uchimura Kanzo was one of them. Out of his disillusionment with the Sino-Japanese War he had reexamined biblical teaching and concluded that the Christian faith required its adherents to be pacifists (Howes:108). Yet in a strange twist of logic, he encouraged would-be conscientious objectors to go to the battlefield as soldiers and die as witnesses to the meaninglessness of war (Howes:116; Dohi:108). Such fatalism reminds us of Uchimura's samurai upbringing (Dohi:215). As it happened, Japan's first conscientious objector emerged in this war not from among Uchimura's disciples but from the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Yabe Kiyoshi, an evangelist, reported to authorities that the command "Thou shalt not kill" disallowed him to become a soldier. After two months in prison he served in the army as a medical corpsman (Bamba and Howes:260; Dohi:215f.).

As it turned out, the strongest critics of militarism during this period were socialists—Christian and otherwise. Combining socialist political analysis and biblical pacifist thought learned from Tolstoy, Abe Isoo and others boldly attacked Japan's military expansionism as serving only the interests of the well-to-do. Abe made a perceptive critique of the Rescript on Education which had linked obedience within the family to obedience to the state:

The idea of the family system [kazoku shugi] is equivalent to belief in a despotic family head [kacho sensei shugi]: it involves a principle of absolute slavery which cannot recognize the personality of women or children. This patriarchalism, this despotism of the family head, when expanded, becomes the despotic policy of the monarchy. . . . Such despotism . . . forms the very life source of the army (Powles, 1978:160).

Thus the Christian socialists considered abolition of ancestor worship and liberation of women to be two requirements for achieving peace (Powles:160). Japan and the church at large would not be ready to listen to Abe for another forty years.

The annexation of Korea

Korea was a prevailing issue in the wars with China and Russia. Let us now examine the effects of Japan's policies toward the Koreans.

Claiming to be acting for Korea's benefit, Japan freed Korea from Chinese control in 1894-95. Yet the Koreans were dismayed to find themselves now in the grips of Japanese control. Japanese authorities even plotted the cold-blooded murder of Korea's empress in 1895 because she was uncooperative to Japanese interests (Oh:101-05). This provoked enough anti-Japanese ferment to cause the collapse of Japan's puppet cabinet in Korea (Oh:107). What followed was a Russian-backed regime that was to fall as a result of the Russo-Japanese War. Korea was then made a protectorate of Japan, ruled by the heavy hand of Japan's military which showed no mercy against dissent. In 1907 Korea's emperor was forced to abdicate

the throne, and in 1910 the nation was annexed by Japan (Oh:107-10). For these moves, Japan was able to buy the support of silence from Britain and the USA in exchange for Japan's silent consent toward British and American colonialism in Asia (Oh:111f.).

Japanese church leaders welcomed the forced annexation of Korea. Ebina Danjo of the Kumiai church naively embraced it as a chance to resurrect Korea as a great independent nation freed from a condition of slavery to other countries (Dohi:304). He could not have been further from the truth, as Korea became increasingly enslaved to its supposed liberator. Uemura was less enthusiastic than Ebina. Though he claimed that the annexation was a God-given mandate for the good of Korea and Japan, authorities banned the sale and distribution of his magazine when he praised the independent, patriotic spirit of the Koreans (Dohi:305). Uchimura was pretty much alone in Japan when he lamented Korea's loss of its nationhood (Oh:122).

In the ensuing years, Japanese authorities used various means to keep Koreans from entertaining any thoughts of civil disobedience. Christians were special targets of police suspicion. This was particularly the case in the infamous "105-person incident" when many Christians were framed on trumped-up charges of sedition. As a result of cruel tortures, some were killed and others scarred for the rest of their lives (Oh:133-40). In the sphere of economics, half of Korea's farmers lost their means of livelihood as a result of Japanese land claims (Oh:145-48,155).

Into this context the Kumiai church heeded the invitation of Japanese government authorities in Korea to evangelize Korea. With financial support from government authorities and Japanese business conglomerates, the Kumiai church set out to accomplish two goals: (1) to make the Koreans citizens of the kingdom of God, and (2) to make them loyal subjects of the Japanese emperor (Oh:165; Dohi:310, 312). Churchman Kashiwagi Gien aptly remarked that this was tantamount to Jesus being paid by Caesar to make Romans out of the Jews (Dohi:312).

In January 1919 Japanese authorities poisoned to death the emperor of Korea, who had refused total cooperation. Suspecting foul play, the distressed Korean populace took to the streets around the nation in nonviolent protests, demanding independence for Korea. The Japanese army answered them with bullets in mass slaughters (Oh:184-87; Dohi:317). The Federation of Christian Churches responded to these events by sending an offering rather than calling into question Japan's role in Korea.

Starting in 1937, Japan's governor-general in Korea introduced new measures to tighten its stranglehold over the people. As a result, Koreans were forced to take Japanese names, pledge allegiance to the emperor, and worship at Shinto shrines (Dohi:254-58). The governor-general mobilized the police to pressure Christians into shrine worship. It is to the church's shame that Japanese church leaders used their influence to convince Korean Christians to worship at the shrine as an act of patriotism (Dohi:260-64; Young:81).

The Fascist years

While Korea was being exploited, two opposing trends in Japanese politics were vying for the upper hand. One was toward greater democracy, the other toward ultranationalism. Rallying under the banner of national unity, forces against participatory government won out. Needless to say, the army was central in this scheme. Consequently the army was able to get away with the forcible takeover of Manchuria in 1931, and in 1937 it became involved in combat in China. In the "rape of

Nanking" Japanese soldiers killed 12,000 noncombatant Chinese in a span of two days. Thus, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, war had already been in progress in the Far East. Yet the terrible misery that war was to bring in the next four years was destined to surpass the gloomiest predictions that could have been made.

One early sign of the turn toward militarism was the 1925 ruling that army officers would be assigned to boys' schools to conduct military training. Along with some non-Christian schools, students at Aoyama Gakuin declared they were against such training. The Christian school's authorities overruled them, saying that military education did not violate Christian teaching (Dohi:366). In 1932 some Sofia University students refused their military trainer's orders to worship at Yasukuni shrine. College President Herrmann Hoffman, S.J., explained to the trainer that shrine worship, being of another religion, could not be done by Christians. When this word got out, the archbishop of Tokyo was told by the government's ministry of education that shrine worship was an educational tool used in fostering patriotism and loyalty. As such, exemptions on religious grounds could not be allowed. As a result the Catholic Church declared the shrine to be nonreligious and accepted shrine worship as a state policy (Dohi:366).

These instances again illustrate how the Shinto religion was used by the state toward militaristic goals. Yet, either because of blind patriotism or for fear of punishment, most Christians came to obey orders to worship at shrines. In 1936 the National Council of Churches itself was to reverse its former stance against shrine worship by accepting the government's definition of the Shinto shrine as nonreligious (Young:68f.). The NCC proceeded to encourage shrine worship as a sign of Christian support of the spirit of the Imperial Rescript (Dohi:345).

As the 1930s progressed, government control of society became tougher by the year. Authorities kept a close watch on the opinions and actions of nonconformists whom they expected to find in the church. With few exceptions, churches learned to follow state guidelines for acceptable behavior, rather than risk being persecuted or being forced to discontinue church activities. In order to escape such harassment church leaders gathered in August 1940 to discuss steps towards uniting Protestant denominations under a central authority (Dohi:346). Church union, after all, had been a desire for many Japanese Protestants since the nineteenth century.

Two specific events made talk of unity an urgent matter. The first was the Religious Bodies Law. That law promised protection for religious bodies with over 5,000 members, provided that they remain loyal to the emperor and serve the nation's interest. In order for religious bodies to be given legal status, the church bylaws and the church head would have to be approved by the government. The government would reserve the right to punish those who would prove to the disloyal (Dohi:349). The other crucial event was the military police investigation of Salvation Army leaders under suspicion of espionage. Shocked especially by this latter incident, church leaders wasted no time in deciding to break relations with foreign mission boards and went beyond the call of duty by working toward a merger of all Protestant denominations into one body (Dohi:350).

Though government pressure was real, the churches for the most part were not loathe to the idea of such patriotic solidarity. Along with the shrine issue, the NCC had already accepted and supported the government's military overtures in Manchuria and in China (Dohi:345ff.). NCC chairman Ebisawa Akira had written in an article entitled "Japanization of Christianity," "[Purely] from our religious viewpoint, we Christians should hold on to the highest ideals and eternal hopes of our faith. But

in reality, when the life or death of our country is at stake as it is today, our duty to the fatherland must be considered first" (Ota, 1978:190). To put it crassly, the choice between God and Caesar had been made, and Caesar came out on top.

In June 1941, thirty-four denominations merged to form the Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan (United Church of Christ in Japan), swearing allegiance to the imperial rule and bowing to the imperial palace. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the newly formed Kyodan group defended Japan's actions and urged its members to contribute to the war effort (Dohi:359). Church services were allowed to continue only by following the Kyodan directive to bow toward the imperial palace. The wartime hymnal deleted references to Christ's kingship and added hymns that linked Shinto expansionist themes with the goals of Christian mission (Young:101f.). In 1944 when Japan's future was already in doubt, the Kyodan took up an offering to buy warplanes and urged its members to redouble their efforts toward victory for the empire (Dohi:358, 360). On Easter of that year, the Kyodan wrote to churches abroad under Japanese domination that Japan was acting in the spirit of neighborly love by fighting a holy war intent on freeing Asians from domination by the decadent West (Morioka and Kasahara, 1974:288-98). Even after all this, Tomita Mitsuru was to express regret for not doing his best to aid the war cause as head of the Kyodan (Lee:151).

In the meantime the Anglican Church (Seikokai), not wanting to join the approved Protestant or Catholic bodies, attempted to register as a third Christian body under the Religious Bodies Law. The attempt failed, and the church was declared legally dissolved by authorities as of March 1942. As a result, about one third of the Seikokai congregations ended up joining the Kyodan (Dohi:354ff.).

What about the resisters? Surely there must have been some! Unlike other so-called pacifists, Yanaihara Tadao consistently criticized expansionistic policies beginning with the Manchurian Incident (Fujita, 1978:206). Because of his position as a professor at the prestigious Tokyo University, Yanaihara was especially a concern for the authorities who were not able to quiet him even after demoting his university position (Fujita:200, 205). Yet Yanaihara was not so radical as to deny all allegiance to the emperor, and he did not encourage conscientious objection to military service, although Ishiga Osamu, a Mukyokai disciple went that course (Dohi:397f.).

Then there was Kagawa Toyohiko, a favorite among American missionaries. Kagawa spoke as a pacifist abroad, but at home in Japan he gave a different impression. Though he was arrested in 1940 for speaking out for peace, he soon changed his tone and forsook his pacifist reputation by casting his lot in favor of the war. Renouncing his former association with international peace groups such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Kagawa went so far as to promote the war cause on government radio (Ota:176-79, 189f.; Dohi:424).

Some of the most courageous resisters acted on grounds other than pacifism alone. The Jehovah's Witnesses were compelled by their strict two-kingdom theology to refuse acts of subservience to the state, particularly for war. They also criticized the government's neglect of the poorer masses who gained nothing from war (Dohi:401). Over fifty of their members were sentenced, and two died while in prison (Dohi:400-03). Plymouth Brethren and Seventh-Day Adventists were among other non-Kyodan groups which faced government harassment as elements disloyal to the state (Morioka and Kasahara:28).

Within the Kyodan, members of Holiness groups suffered mass arrest simply because of their belief in Christ's second coming. They were judged as guilty even though they testified

that their theology had nothing to do with the political realm. This group and at least one other individual under Kyodan rule had the misfortune of being harassed not only by the government but also by the Kyodan which in effect disowned them (Dohi:403-07; Morioka and Kasahara:24ff.; Young:113).

A new beginning

The Japanese story of the church and militarism did not end in 1945. For one thing, the Kyodan had to face its own past. Yet the earliest postwar statements of the Kyodan lay great stress on the need for Christians to unite to build a new Japan while making vague comments about the unfortunate war experience (Morioka and Kasahara:92ff.) The Kyodan did not really face up to its collective guilt until the 1967 "Confession of War Responsibility." Meanwhile, new and returned American missionaries were generally willing to overlook the church's guilt because they did not want to ruin Christianity's image at a time when they were trying to carry out General MacArthur's (Caesar's) well-intentioned desire to see Japan Westernized through Christianization.

Japan made history in 1947 by co-drafting the unprecedented peace clause (article nine) of the constitution. The nation had passed a law against war and the maintenance of a force to fight it. Yet, with the rising power of communist forces in the Far East and with hostilities in Korea, the USA saw in Japan a potential ally needing to be rearmed. Thus the beginnings of the Self-Defense Force, Japan's "non-army," were under way. The U.S.-Japan peace treaty was eventually to make the two nations de facto military allies. As for the war in Korea, Japan was able to make tremendous profits through sale of supplies to United Nations forces there.

In the 1950s and '60s Christian pacifists and a large coalition of peace activists took up their pens and placards to protest developments within Japan that seemed to contradict the popular peace constitution. Yet the blatant disregard of the constitution's intent has continued until the present day.

Japan's "non-military" now ranks among the ten largest defense budgets in the world, and strategic planning to counter the highly touted Soviet threat are only continuing to heighten tensions. Voices are heard complaining that Japan is getting a free ride in national security from the USA, and so it should shoulder more of the responsibility itself. Yet a disturbing question comes to mind. What is the purpose of all this military madness? Is the Soviet Union really a threat to Japan? Even if the risk is real, what is the purpose of a stronger military when Japan can be effectively crippled by a few well-placed nuclear explosions?

Where is the church in all of this? It is active in the struggle against repeated attempts to nationalize the Yasukuni shrine again. And it was present in issuing concern about recent textbook revisions that are covering up Japan's war story. But is it too much to wish that the church in Japan would declare its preparedness to live without the protection of weapons poised to destroy Soviet citizens, Christian and otherwise? Or is it too much to wish that American missionaries in Japan would do the same and publicly disavow any connection with the increasing American military presence there?

A temptation at the end of this study is to say, "How awful the Japanese record was," and "Let's hope they don't do it again." But any good history lesson ought to teach us something about ourselves. The weight of this study points back to our own situations and our responses to them. Just as Shinto was used as a rallying force for militant nationalism in Japan, we ought to admit that Christianity was abused in the nineteenth century to justify militant American nationalism known as manifest destiny. Regrettably, such cases of sanctified militarism and vio-

lence still flourish. Against this tide, let us continue to proclaim the lordship of Christ whose reign supersedes the interests of any one nation or leader.

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In review

Protestantism in Central America. By Wilton M. Nelson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, 90 pp., \$4.95 (pb)

Reviewed by James C. Dekker

One of the last things Wilton Nelson did before his death in March 1984 was to finish the translation and revision of this little book. A missionary-teacher for over forty years in Costa Rica, Nelson distinguished himself and the Latin American Biblical Seminary where he taught by careful and devout scholarship, writing, and teaching.

This book is Nelson's own contribution on Central American Protestantism to the ambitious ecumenical Commission for Studies of the History of the Church in Latin America (CEHILA) project headed by Roman Catholic church historian Enrique Dussel.

Nelson's book packs a lot of facts into ninety pages (including footnotes). Brevity makes the book attractive for readers beginning to study about Central America. The brevity, however, often turns diffuse and sketchy. Possibly because of space limits placed on him by CEHILA, Nelson most often relates events without historical or theological analysis. Hence beginning students will have a hard time grasping much beyond the chronological flow of events.

For example, Nelson observes that English pirates were the first Protestants in Central America. While hardly devout, those rogues nevertheless "gave a religious interpretation to their activities" by swearing on the Bible and counting "the plundering of the Spanish as almost a Holy War against the greed of the *conquistadores* and the cruelty of the Inquisition" (p. 4). Without exploring that further, Nelson goes on to the next facts.

But it is downright sobering to consider that such Protestants came to Central America with as much political baggage as did the imperialist Spanish Roman Catholics and their co-opted priests. The historical judgment that Nelson does not make should be spelled out: the Christian religion in Central America served from the outset as a legitimizing force for the imperial designs of both Roman Catholic Spain and Protestant England.

All the other CEHILA material I have seen both records data and exhaustively analyzes events. Oddly, Nelson's contribution to CEHILA avoids that. Nelson records all the data: Methodism came to Panama and Costa Rica along with the foreign-administered canal project and the banana industries; Guatemalan President Justo Rufino Barrios considered it important for his country's development to have a brand of Christianity other than Romanism available to the people and hence invited the Northern Presbyterian Church;

liberal political leaders of all the republics openly courted immigrants from Protestant countries to stimulate trade and break clericalism's hold on the young nations.

These are not neutral facts, though Nelson's mere recital of them gives that impression. There are relationships in attitude and action between the inauspicious buccaneer beginnings and the long series of potential and actual expedient political compromises that later official emissaries of Protestantism made as they carried the gospel to Central America.

In another place, while writing about the diversity of Evangelicals in Central America, Nelson remarks that "the vast majority felt that they had a basic . . . unity which was revealed in the common name by which almost all of them identified themselves: '*evangélicos*' (not '*protestantes*,' a term that had little significance for them)" (p. 60). Here too Nelson should have explained, both for the sake of those *evangélicos* themselves and for those boards that send missionaries to Central America, why the term *protestantes* means little.

Because of an almost total lack of historical identification and instruction in their religious upbringing, most *evangélicos* have no conception of who they are within church history. Their history as Christians begins with their individual conversions. Many *evangélicos* know of no connection with the church between Acts and Martin Luther and little since Luther. As a result, they are unable to identify anything in the Roman Catholic Church before—or even after—Vatican II as related to their own history. Such ahistoricism makes for superficial, fragile—though temporarily fervent—faith. Nelson does point out that fact in several places, though without developing the phenomenon.

These complaints are major, but they do not detract from this book's usefulness. Nelson writes clearly, almost encyclopedically. He makes proper distinctions between "Foreign Protestantism" and later attempts to bring the gospel within Protestant denominations to Central America. Nelson's descriptions of Bible Society colporteurs' distribution and educational activities show how their crucial work prepared for later church planting.

Most helpful for beginning students will be Nelson's descriptions of the mission character of the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church. Without saying so directly, his reports of Catholic missionaries fostering Bible study among their once-nominal parishioners makes it hard to avoid the following conclusion: for nearly two decades, Protestants have unwillingly and unwittingly had in their still-official enemies not a few kingdom allies.

Nelson's own verve for post-Vatican II ecumenical relations sparkles when he writes of

the activities that he and his colleagues took part in during the heady days in Costa Rica shortly after the council's close. Such lively copy takes on considerable significance in all Latin America now that progressive Catholics and Protestants alike are wondering just what Pope John Paul II's jet-setting to Latin America will mean for ecumenical relations and mutual respect. On all his trips John Paul II's vindication of Romanism—rather than Catholicism—is once more making life difficult for *evangélicos* and their crypto-kingdom colleagues in the Roman Catholic Church.

Chapter V, "Characteristics of the Early Evangelicals," provides an excellent sketch to help students understand why many Evangelicals in Central America today maintain virulent anti-Catholic attitudes. The Roman Catholic Church hierarchy for many years made life miserable for *evangélicos*. Many missionaries, of course, came preaching anti-Catholicism, a position that hardened with each interrupted worship service or broken church window. At one time in Central America the hierarchy predicted that "conversion to Protestantism was the first step to Communism" (p. 54). How ironic today, then, that many North American Christians and missionaries are accusing Roman Catholic priests of importing Marxist revolution to Central America.

Wilton Nelson did the church he loved a final service with this little book. Though we could wish for more, that task will necessarily fall on others. Those who take up the job will find a good starting point in this book and its footnotes that provide a surprisingly large bibliography that is accessible to serious students.

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Sent Free: Mission and Unity in the Perspective of the Kingdom. By Emilio Castro. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985, 102 pp., \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Lawrence M. Yoder

Sent Free is a popularized version of the author's *Freedom in Mission: the Perspective of the Kingdom of God* published in the World Council of Churches Risk series. Castro is currently WCC's General Secretary.

The main thesis of this book is that mission demands "total freedom" to serve the kingdom of God, "to participate in its announcement and in its manifestation" (p. x) and await its coming.

Sounding rather vague at first, the author

calls this missionary freedom "the capacity to respond in love to the need of all" (p. 87). But he intends for the concept of the kingdom of God as learned from Scripture, the findings of social science research, the community of faith especially in its ecumenical dimensions and the "praxis of love" to serve as reference points or criteria in the exercise of that freedom.

Castro believes that recognizing this freedom could free the church from much frustrating discussion on secondary issues and reveal an underlying unity in the midst of diverse expressions of the church's mission.

These diverse forms of mission he views as various "points of entry" into the single struggle of the kingdom. "Church growth and social justice concerns do not contradict each other" (p. 7). Conversion is much more than a psychological experience; it is to join in the kingdom movement. Dividing kingdom vision into evangelistic and social-service institutions tends to lead to an abdication of the fullness of Christian responsibility.

Castro is conversant with the whole range of missionary thinking from conservative Protestant to the theologians of liberation. He listens to the Bible (ch. 5) and to the church around the world. *Sent Free* is a creative and stimulating book.

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The Apostolic Church. By Everett F. Harrison. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985, 251 pp., \$8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Roelf S. Kuitse

Everett F. Harrison is Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary. In this book he writes about the early church, based on the information given in Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles. Acts of the Apostles and Paul's epistles are important parts of the New Testament for missionaries. Harrison's book is a helpful guide in understanding the challenges the early church had to face in its response to Christ's missionary call.

In the first chapter we read about the background of the apostolic age. This chapter is too short; more should have been said about the religious background of the apostolic age. In the second chapter attention is given to historical-critical questions in regard to Acts and the speeches in Acts. The external history and

the internal development of the church are the subjects of the third and the fourth chapters. In these chapters we can read about church and state, church and society, incipient creeds, ministry, teaching, and discipline. The last chapter introduces us to individual churches in Jerusalem, Antioch, Philippi, Corinth, Rome, and other cities. The last chapter is particularly helpful and interesting.

The book contains a wealth of information. Not all readers will agree with the interpretations of the author. There is difference of opinion possible, for example, on the question of where and when the prison epistles were written and of the importance and the role of creedal statements (pp. 121-22).

Many readers of *Mission Focus* will find it difficult to accept the interpretation of Romans 13:1-7, which ends with the words, "It is well to draw a distinction between our attitude toward a personal enemy . . . and our responsibility to serve our country in time of war as part of our submission to the state as an authority instituted by God (Rom. 13:1)." Yet, we can be thankful to the writer for his effort to bring us again in contact with the beginnings of the history of the church and the missionary movement.

Roelf S. Kuitse is Professor of Missions at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries and Associate Director of the Mission Training Center, Elkhart, Indiana.

Beyond the Mosque: Christians Within Muslim Community. By Phil Parshall. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985, 256 pp., \$9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Hans Kasdorf

As each book should, this one is bound to expand the horizons of most Christian readers. Its overriding theme lodges in the common word **community**, with profound religious and theological meaning for both the Christian and the Islamic believers. It is precisely with reference to the Muslim aspect of community that the Christian's understanding will be greatly stretched.

The author introduces the Islamic concept of *ummah*. Thereby the Muslims understand "God's chosen community which is engaged in worship of Allah and meaningful interaction with each of the members of the *ummah*" (p. 125). This concept not only embraces all adherents of Islam. Theoretically, it also dominates Muslim thinking and practices in every aspect of life (pp. 11, 179) and is particularly helpful in enhancing the "level of consciousness of spiritual unity" (p. 21).

Not denying the fact that Islam is politically, culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically divided, Parshall rightly states that it is still "proud of its brotherhood" and its unity, its very real and worldwide *ummah* (pp. 155, 87, 97, 101). Therefore, he says, "Christians who desire to share their faith with Muslims must recognize the factors of homogeneity and community that give cohesion to Muslims" (p. 21).

This means there is no room for "extraction evangelism," the method by which converts to Christ are removed from their sociological milieu of the extended family, friends, and acquaintances. Just as the first Jewish converts to Christ formed a Christian community, a cohesive *ekklesia* of believers who cared for one another within Jewish society, so Muslim converts must form a Christian *ummah* to care for one another in the context of Islamic society (pp. 21, 150f.). "It behooves the church to equal if not excel the Muslim sense of brotherhood" (p. 176).

The final chapter of the book is a classic of missionary literature. Any attempts to review it could only do it injustice. It must be read in total (pp. 177-227).

In fact, the whole book is required reading for those called by God to win Muslims to Christ in a time when their number is approaching the one billion mark or one fifth of the globe's population.

An excellent bibliography, a glossary, and several indices enhance the usefulness of this book.

Hans Kasdorf is Associate Professor of World Mission, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Missions U.S.A. By Earl Parvin. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985, 380 pp. \$12.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Roy Just

Earl Parvin is chairman of the department of missions at Appalachian Bible College, having served as pastor and missionary both abroad and in the USA. *Missions U.S.A.* is a compelling book, shaking many misconceptions American evangelicals hold concerning their homeland. This excellent handbook of information presents the thesis that, contrary to popular opinion, within the USA are people groups who are beyond the sound of the gospel and who will not hear it without specific mission strategies that are not now in place.

Only 35 million Americans (15%) are active evangelicals (Gallup), and they often live in clusters isolated from the most unevangelized peoples. Evangelical church growth in Europe

and America falls below the annual loss (2,765,000) to nominalism or unbelief (Dayton). Leighton Ford is calling for the reevangelization of the West.

Parvin marshals his facts well. Vast multitudes of Americans live and die without ever hearing the gospel. Far from being a melting pot of typical Americans, the USA is a mosaic of ethnics distinguished by culture and language nearly as isolated from the gospel preached in English as they would be in their native countries. One hundred million Americans belong to 200 language/culture groups other than Anglo-American. Christians must awaken to the cause of discovering and serving the gospel-neglected who are frequently found in the shadows of gospel-preaching churches but are culturally and linguistically distant.

Parvin challenges the myths that the gospel is readily accessible to every American and that every Christian is a missionary. He stresses the mission theology and practice of Acts 13 to 15, as did the early Anabaptists. Congregations must discern, train, send, and support those gifted for mission.



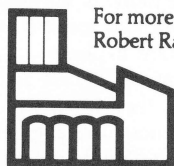
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Missions U.S.A. presents a brief history of home missions; a good section on ethnic ministries; institutional ministries such as prisons, agencies of mercy, military, and educational; and geographic ministries such as rural/mountain and urban/suburban. Many helpful maps, graphs, charts, and mission agency lists will assist any congregation or denomination interested in locating and ministering to America's unreached and neglected millions. God has quietly raised up 400 home mission agencies, albeit woefully understaffed and undersupported, to address this great American need. By now forty of 600 foreign mission societies have organized work to minister to emigrés in this country from their places of work overseas.

"The greatest single problem that home missions face in this 20th century is not the de-Christianization of American society . . . but a sleeping church, unaware of the spiritual needs of those in its community" (p. 38). Many American unreached groups would be more likely to hear the gospel if they lived in Africa or New Guinea.

Roy Just is Director of Mission Major, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College.

The Church in China: How It Survives and Prospers under Communism. By Carl Lawrence. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1985, 169 pp. \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Roger E. Hedlund

A list of people murdered by the Mao regime in China would make the holocaust in Europe seem insignificant. As China digs out of the rubble of the Cultural Revolution, a church emerges, conservatively estimated at 30 million. What is the secret of this dramatic and unexpected growth? "The Lord has wonderfully revived His Church at the grass-roots level, both in town and countryside. People at every level of society are being converted."

From about 700,000 Protestant Christians at the time of the communist takeover, through the "great tribulation" violence, torture, starvation, and bloodshed of the Red Guard period, to the house-church explosion of today is a modern record of signs and wonders. Carl Lawrence, program director for Haven of Rest and twenty years a missionary in Southeast Asia, gives a moving account of endurance and spontaneous expansion.

Persecution gave birth to a body of believers prepared to face the most difficult of circumstances. The house-church phenomenon is a contextual response to persecution and suffer-

ing. Frequently the sole source of encouragement, instruction, and nurture for groups of believers in China has been the Bible. Lawrence testifies that it is not uncommon to find a group of several hundred people with only one Bible. Individuals have been known to walk a hundred miles to borrow a Bible for a short time.

The official Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) church is criticized in this book. TSPM leaders have consistently understated the number of Christians in China. TSPM controls the sale of Bibles—generally only to TSPM members. TSPM opposes conversions. TSPM is an official arm of the state designed for the control of the official churches and the eventual destruction of Christianity. Despite such efforts to subvert the Christian movement in China, the author predicts that the house-church movement will continue to grow.

What lessons come to us from China via this book? The apparently spontaneous growth of Christ's church, unguided save by the Holy Spirit and itinerant preachers with a unique knowledge of Scripture, is a challenging point. Ecclesiastical structures, buildings, and clergy do not seem to be part of the process at all. Prayer, Bible study, miracles, evangelistic outreach, and the practice of forgiveness appear to be the basic ingredients.

Mao, says the author, prepared China to receive the gospel. Is anything similar happening in other parts of the world? One of the tantalizing parts of the story to me, one with potential application to India, is the role of radio in building the church. This exciting book is enjoyable reading and is highly recommended to the non-expert, like me, who wants to find out what is happening to the church in China today.

Roger E. Hedlund is coordinator and lecturer at Church Growth Research Centre, Madras, India.

Twenty Centuries of Ecumenism. By Jacques Eliséé Desseaux, translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. New York: Paulist Press, 1984, \$4.95 (pb)

Reviewed by William Klassen

This booklet has established itself in two brief years as an authoritative statement on an important historical and contemporary issue: How has, and how does, and how should the church come to terms with the prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17:21, "that they may all be one"?

As has often been noted, Jesus did not pray

for the "unity" of the believers who would follow him; rather, he prayed for their "oneness." A good Greek word which denotes "unity," which is used to denote the unity of the faith in Ephesians 4:13, puts emphasis on the underlying unity of persons working together for the common good.

Desseaux's book makes it clear that the history of the church can be described as a breakdown of that oneness. Theological as well as historical issues have been cited as the source of such a breakdown. Groups have been estranged from each other as they have developed historical forms of Christianity in various parts of the world.

But, thanks be to God, the church as always also had its reform movements where Christians, driven by that human mix of ambition, conviction, firmly held beliefs, and courage, have moved beyond their group and established a dissenting position. At the same time there have been strong reconciliation movements and major rediscoveries of commonly held convictions and even repentance for the refusal to take seriously the prayer of Christ: that they may all be one.

Fundamental to the movement toward reconciliation and union has been the process of reception. Reception, a phenomenon which is moving toward center stage in ecumenical discussions, means simply the process by which the churches—or the people in the churches—receive the new energy and insights which the Holy Spirit is bringing to the churches. It is a process essential to the faith and life of the church because initiatives toward union cannot be proclaimed from the top.

Desseaux's study of history tells us that in a hellish cycle the church's fabric has until now been rent anew every five centuries (p. 3). Furthermore, "when confronted with the requirement of visible unity, all the churches are found to be unfaithful." This he finds to be a scandal, not only to people but even essentially to God. "Before the Father and the Lord Jesus and in view of their responsibility to bear witness to the reign of Jesus through the Spirit, the Churches among us are unfaithful. They are a source of scandal because they have wasted the gift of Unity in Jesus Christ. The scandal is theological" (p. 5).

The author observes that the missionary movement more than anything else has spawned the modern ecumenical movement. As early as 1806 William Carey, the Baptist, suggested to Henry Martyn, an Anglican, that missionaries from all over the world should meet every ten years in Capetown; he hoped that they would begin in 1810. That hope was not realized, but from then on "missionary zeal would increasingly feed ecumenical zeal" (p. 40).

The author as Roman Catholic has made a

strong case for the need to work toward the oneness of the church. This must be done through dialogue and through the process known as reception in which the church body or denomination progressively makes its own a decision which initially it did not accept; it does this by gradually coming to see the measure promulgated as one truly in keeping with its life (p. 61).

An example is the way in which General Conference Mennonite churches have over the years received the new spiritual impulses which God gave to the Mennonite churches through the ministry of the Mennonite Brethren. Another is the way in which all Mennonite groups have received from other Mennonite groups the spiritual energy and vitality they display in such arenas as Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Central Committee, and other cooperative ventures.

This book is timely, well written, and highly recommended for anyone who wants a brief summary of the movements in the church dealing with the oneness of Christ's church. Excellent for classroom study groups as well, it directs itself to some of the burning issues of the day, including the desire to be faithful to the truth committed to us by Christ as well as to the prayer of Jesus: that they may all be one.

Desseaux leaves us with the important question: "What excuse can we give to justify our refusal to reunite? What will we say to God to justify this division of brothers and sisters, after Christ came down from heaven, took flesh and was crucified in order to unite us and make us a single flock? How will we excuse ourselves to our contemporaries?" (p. 85). That question was posed by Cardinal Bessarion in the early fifteenth century and is as important to us today as it was then.

William Klassen is director of Inter-Faith Academy of Peace, Tantar, West Bank.

Poverty and Mission: New Testament Perspectives on a Contemporary Theme. By Johannes Nissen. Leiden (Utrecht): Universitair Instituut Voor Missiologie, 1984, 208 pp., (pb)

Reviewed by David Ewert

Nissen is a Danish professor of New Testament at the University of Aarhus and a member of the Board of the Danish Missionary Society. *Poverty and Mission* grew out of Nissen's work at the University of Leiden, where he served as a visiting scholar on a university fellowship.

Nissen seeks to do a sociological analysis of the New Testament materials (particularly the

synoptic Gospels) on the topic under investigation without denying that the New Testament writers were creative theologians. The first part is a study of the Synoptics, some parts of Acts, the epistle of James, and a few pericopes from the Paulines.

Those not conversant with some of the methods of modern biblical scholarship will find some of Nissen's work rather bewildering. Indeed, one would have to take issue with some of Nissen's views of trustworthiness of the biblical text. The story of Jesus' temptation he holds to be mythical and, in any case, anachronistic as far as its location in the Gospels is concerned (p. 31). Also, one must raise serious questions about Nissen's exegesis of some texts. "Forgive us our debts" in the Matthean form of the Lord's Prayer does not mean simply to forgive the sins of others (as Luke has it) but also the financial debts (p. 44). Really?

As I understand Nissen, he is arguing that the poor, the disadvantaged, stand closer to God because of their helplessness, and that Jesus and his apostles, who also became poor, are the models for modern Christian missions. This has implications not only for the manner in which the church carries out its mission but also for the audience to whom the gospel is proclaimed.

This is a difficult book to read, and this reviewer got through the volume only by reading a chapter at a sitting over a period of time. If Nissen wanted to sensitize his readers to the needs of the disadvantaged, he succeeds admirably. However, I am not certain that the book offers much help to the missiologist. The book is somewhat disjointed and would have been greatly helped if Nissen had given us a summary of his findings at the end with some practical suggestions for the church in its missionary task.

David Ewert is President and Professor of New Testament at Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

A Gandhian Theology of Liberation. By Ignatius Jesudasan. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984, 179 pp., \$10.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Henry G. Krahn

This book is the product of extensive research on a subject relevant to thinkers from both East and West. In fact, it provides a helpful bridge between Eastern and Western thought.

In my view the author was guided in his research by his studies in liberation theology, his profound appreciation for the teachings and life of Gandhi, and his understanding of the

Christian religion. These factors not only guided him but were a constant source of inspiration to him. The author's personal interest in the subject researched, however, may have interfered with the exercise of his critical faculties at significant points in the development of his thesis.

The author's primary concern is to present Gandhi's ideology which he defines as "liberation theology." Gandhi's theology, as the author clearly points out, is not the product of an armchair scholar but of life itself. The growth and development of Gandhi's thought, as presented by Jesudasan, was coincidental with the experiences of his life, which were closely interwoven with the history of India.

The first chapters of the book portray rather well the many influences which shaped the sensitive Gandhi. These are analyzed within the context of the complex interplay of historical forces at work in India during Gandhi's lifetime. My impression is that in this section Jesudasan is dependent to a large extent on the work of others.

The author's main contribution to research on Gandhi may be found in the chapters dealing with the theology of "Swaraj." His attempt to define Swaraj as a concept that was built on the broader ground of culture, religion, and civilization, rather than on considerations of politics and economics, is noteworthy. The author is also of the opinion that Swaraj is a universal concept upheld by most living religions. Gandhi understood the universal elements of Swaraj and attempted to prove that it rests solidly on religious foundations.

Jesudasan's view is that Gandhi revolted from any civilization that was empirically godless and soulless or unconcerned about God and the human soul in its structural and functional aspects. Thus Gandhi came to believe that there could be no autonomy apart from God-realization or a God-oriented self-realization.

What this means is that Gandhi was opposed to the viewpoint that modern civilization must be built on secular foundations. These foundations, according to Gandhi, must be religious. It was the religious concept of Swaraj which should guide political, economic, and religious leaders and would eventually bring about political and social transformation. Gandhi's vision extended beyond India, and his formula for change had universal application.

In the last chapters Jesudasan deals with Gandhi's theology of religions, focusing especially on the challenge Gandhi presents to Christianity as a whole. Here the author again depends heavily on the works of M. M. Thomas and others. It is quite obvious that the author, like Gandhi himself, is caught up in the tension between the concept of Christ as exclu-

sive and the image of Christ as universal.

Like Gandhi himself, Jesudasan has great difficulties with the historic church which sanctioned both materialist civilization and the exploitation of one race by another. Like Gandhi, Jesudasan does not question the lordship of Christ, but he does question the lordship of the church.

Henry G. Krahn teaches history at Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Previously he served as president there and as a missionary in India.

Living Overseas: A Book of Preparations. By Ted Ward. New York: The Free Press, 1984, 358 pp., \$16.00

Reviewed by Hans Kasdorf

How do we train people to communicate Christ cross-culturally in a most effective way? How can they be helped to make the transition from the Anglo-American culture to other cultures with a minimum of frustration, stress, and pain? How can Americans learn to appreciate their own culture without devaluing another? How can they learn another language when they have thought all along that theirs is the universal tongue? How can they develop coping skills and interpersonal relationships with fellow missionaries and national workers?

Ward deals with these and many other issues we encounter in cross-cultural living and serving. I read the book last summer and made it required reading for participants in the Church Mission Institute. The response was overwhelmingly positive. My only regret was that I had never had such "a book of preparations" when I made cultural transitions.

The book has thirteen chapters; each is a unit by itself, and combined they form a library of orientation. The appendices of games for cultural learning (p. 295) added advice and wisdom (p. 313); many pages of practical and professional information (p. 318f.) provide a rich source of multicultural insights and a guide to resources that every sojourner and worker in other lands will welcome. The easy style and the spicy humor make it delightful reading.

Alone the introduction and the first chapter are much more than "an invitation to experience"; they are a device to stretch every inch of a potential missionary's or overseas traveler's imagination. More than that, they force readers to take stock of their ethnocentric self-perception and lead to intercultural orientation. If the readers still fail to see who

they are, chapter two will tear open their eyes and minds to exercise restraints when it comes to eating Kentucky Fried Chicken in Stockholm or *balut*, a chick embryo delicacy, at rural bus stops in the Philippines.

Learning to become bicultural is harder than becoming bilingual and thus even more challenging. But neither is without hazards. Ward helps us to immerse ourselves gracefully into both. His numerous illustrations from history, anthropology, missiology, experience, and common sense help us to make the complex experience of acculturation less complicated and more creative and enjoyable.

At the end of each chapter Ward asks some hard questions for personal reflection and review. Then he concludes with a kind of an "altar call" for commitment. This forces readers to interact with issues, correct their prejudices, and make concrete attitudinal changes.

The book is what it promises to be: a book of preparation and orientation for traveling, living, working, and witnessing in cross-cultural contexts. No one engaging in such a task can afford not to read it.

Hans Kasdorf is Associate Professor of World Mission, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Preparing Missionaries for Intercultural Communication. By Lyman E. Reed. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1985, 204 pp., \$6.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Les Mark

Preparing Missionaries for Intercultural Communication is a result of a need as seen by missionary and teacher Lyman Reed. A graduate of Columbia Bible College, Wheaton College, and Fuller Theological Seminary, Reed has provided the evangelical college student who is preparing for Christian international service an invaluable intercultural handbook.

After having served as a missionary nearly twenty years and after realizing how ill-prepared missionaries often have been in the area of intercultural understanding, this reviewer regrets that this book was not written earlier. No book can abolish the cultural faux pas so characteristic of many missionaries, but a sincere study and application of Reed's book will certainly reduce those blunderings of ignorance that often repulse those who seek to know Christ.

Six of the ten chapters relate to how several inadequacies in traditional missionary training can be met. Reed has written of understanding

the work, social structures, adequate language learning, adequate cultural learning, the importance of a worldview, and the dynamics of cultural change. An extensive and excellent bibliography enables the reader to continue in the field of study.

The book is well designed as a college text, is carefully outlined for study, and is relatively easy reading. It could be improved by using a larger and clearer print but is well worth its modest price which makes it accessible to the student with limited resources.

Les Mark is a Professor in the Humanities and Biblical Studies Divisions of Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College. He earlier was a missionary to Mexico and a pastor.

Unto the Uttermost: Missions in the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. Edited by Doug Priest, Jr. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1984, 312 pp., \$8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Robert T. Coote

Doug Priest, Jr., missionary to the Maasai, presents in this volume a sampling of the mission heritage, activity, and thinking of the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ (CC/CC).

Frederick A. Norris's "God and the Gods: Expect Footprints" stands out in the opening section on the theology of mission. He mines the Scriptures and finds striking evidence of inspired borrowings from pagan cultures, thus encouraging the missionary to look for "God's Footprints" in the culture of the host people.

Of the four chapters covering the history of missionary outreach within the Restoration Movement, the account of founding elder Alexander Campbell's mission theory and implementation is particularly well done and interesting.

The section on missionary anthropology includes the editor's own study of a Maasai purification ceremony; it exemplifies disciplined and sensitive observation of cultural forms and meanings but leaves the missiological application rather up in the air. Another chapter illustrates the use of a particular Indonesian indigenous form for gospel communication, but the proposal struck this reviewer as contrived and dubious. Charles R. Taber's contribution in this section, "Culture, Ideology and Christian Mission," is the most rewarding, especially the material on worldview, cultural relativity, ideology, and implications for mission.

The final section on mission theory begins with a useful sketch of the life of Donald A. McGavran and the sources of his Church

Growth School of Thought. The author, Herbert W. Works, is one of several in the book associated with Christian Missionary Fellowship, one of the few cooperative-style sending agencies within the CC/CC Restoration Movement tradition. Most CC/CC mission efforts are executed by individual congregations acting as their own sending agencies. This explains the fragmented nature of the CC/CC missionary enterprise and the role this volume may have in catalyzing and solidifying mission commitment for its intended audience.

Robert T. Coote is Assistant to the Director for Planning and Development of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, Ventnor, New Jersey.

A People for His Name: A Church-Based Missions Strategy. By Paul S. Beals. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1985, 248 pp., \$9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Glendon Klaassen

This book has something for all who are involved in cross-cultural mission (or "missions," as the author prefers). One might describe this as an introductory book to missions or a handbook of mission information. Beals' work has a little bit of all that missionaries at home or in other countries need to know, plus what home churches and mission agencies may find helpful. It is apparent that the author writes from years of experience in mission in Africa and in North America.

The book is divided into six parts: "The Biblical Basis of Missions Strategy," "The Strategic Role of the Home Church," "The Strategic Role of the Mission Agency," "The Strategic Role of the Missionary," "The Strategic Role of the Theological School," "The Divine Imperative in Missions Strategy."

As the subtitle indicates, Beals emphasizes a strong church base for mission. This ownership of missionaries and programs at the local church level is certainly healthy and commendable. One gets the feeling, however, that more thought and emphasis need to be given to the relationships of North American workers and mission agencies to the church partners in other countries. Current missiology must take into serious consideration the vision, plans, and action of such churches and how North Americans relate to those churches. This perspective and consequent pages of counsel concerning this matter are lacking, even though Beals writes for North Americans. That makes it all the more imperative.

The concept of missionaries going to "the field" (p. 149, etc.) feels like language of a generation ago. One feels uncomfortable also with Beals' treatment of the "cultural mandate" (Gen. 1:28) and the "evangelism mandate" (Matt. 28:19-20) in chapter 4 (pp. 35ff.). He acknowledges that both are mandates of being salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16), but concludes, "The first mandate is a corollary to the church's mission, but it is not an integral part of it" (p. 42). The Mennonite/Anabaptist tradition would question this conclusion. Did Jesus dichotomize life and mission in this way?

This is an orderly book with the purpose, explanations, and summary in each of the 22 chapters. It moves fast, is easily readable because of clearly explained steps, and is intentionally biblical. The index of six pages of Scripture references is proof. This missiology and its implications are taught from biblical texts.

Currently Beals is missions professor at the Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary. In this book Beals frequently includes expository sections of Scripture (p. 36, etc.), including original Greek word meanings. Each chapter has simple but helpful line diagrams to illustrate the content. Frequently documented references to related works add to the value of this book as a missions resource.

Besides the Scripture and subject indices there is a seven-page bibliography listing. This is a good, all-around missions resource book, especially helpful to beginners in this field of interest.

Glendon Klaassen, Newton, Kansas, is Secretary for Latin America for the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church. He earlier was a missionary in Colombia.

Editorial

On any reading the Bible is the story of many crossings—boundaries are to be breached, frontiers are to be penetrated—for a purpose.

- Abram crossed from Ur to Canaan.
- Moses led the people across sea and desert to Canaan.
- Messiah entered the human realm as Immanuel.
- Jesus broke the barrier between Jew and Gentile to serve the Samaritan and Syrophenician women.
- Jesus dispatched the disciples to the frontiers.
- After forging a new peoplehood at Pentecost the Spirit began dispersing the disciples in ways that underscore the novelty and radicality of this movement: Peter overcame his inbred prejudices to go to Cornelius, and Paul and Barnabas were released to carry the witness to the Mediterranean world.

Ralph Winter has suggested that the foundation for the great commission is to be found in Genesis. Five times God announces: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). Twice this benedictory promise is addressed to Abraham; once it is spoken to the three visitors who call at Abraham's tent; and it is given to both Isaac and Jacob. Each time God utters this phrase it is in the context of defining the special character of the people of God and their vocation.

If these texts anticipate the great commission, the force of the passages suggests that the recent emphasis on the distinctive visions of mission in the two Testaments—**centripetal** in the Old, **centrifugal** in the New—may be difficult to sustain. Several observations can be made based on these passages as a unit.

1. These passages have both a particular and a universal address. The people of God are treated as subject while the "families of the earth" and the "nations" are the object. The one/few play a special role on behalf of the many. There is no doubt as to God's ultimate concern and goal. The salvation of the people of God is linked to the salvation of the whole world.

2. At the heart of this call is the promise that the peoples will be "blessed through you." The opposite of blessing is curse. The primary thrust in these passages is that the peoples might have opportunity to enjoy God's saving grace and presence (cf. Gen. 28:4). Blessing is a sign of the covenant relationship. To

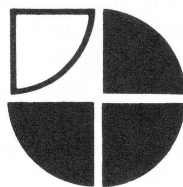
have God's blessing is to enjoy right relationship and fellowship with God. To "bless the nations" is to lead them into salvation. Surely this motive stands behind the witness to the other religions which Calvin Shenk traces for us in Acts.

3. The call to be a blessing becomes the controlling dynamic in the unfolding witness. The world has seen one imperium after the other rise and then fall. Typically these powers have operated out of a sense of manifest destiny, justifying their program—however ruthless or unjust their rule—as necessary to the well-being and order of the world. The mandate to Abraham and the people of God is precisely the opposite. Their presence and witness is to be salvific and lead to restored relationship. The proof will be found in the testimony of the peoples themselves, not in the self-advertised successes of the empire. This will be a new propaganda. Rather than the kind which extolls the virtues of the conqueror, it will be the grateful chorus of "a great multitude . . . from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9b). Ken Johnson Shenk's study of the Christian record in Japan offers food for reflection in this regard.

4. The command to become a blessing requires moving out, crossing boundaries, working on the frontiers. For example, Abraham is assured that "your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies" (Gen. 22:17b, NIV), but this is linked to their being a blessing. This is not to be occupation by destructive coercion. But neither does this call allow for retreat from the world or from supposed strongholds of enemy resistance. Instead God firmly lays claim to all the world and enlists the elect in the winning of that world.

5. The call assumes the people of God are a mobile people, spreading out to the four corners of the earth, interpenetrating with all peoples: "Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south" (Gen. 28:14, NIV). This allows for no parochialism isolation. The people of God are to be permanently a pilgrim people who sit loose of all other loyalties lest these interfere with their primary vocation to be the means of "blessing/saving" the peoples of the world.—Wilbert R. Shenk

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Partnership: Focus of Early Church Mission

DOROTHY YODER NYCE

Via stories from Acts, Romans, and Philippians, this article attempts to clarify how members of the early Christian community were entrusted with a message to live and tell. Not apologetic or hesitant, persuaded they were to share the vision and task. Partners they were too. Together, women and men set the precedent for missioning.

House church context

The house church phenomenon is central to understanding both the spread of the gospel and the significant partnership of women and men. Early Hebrew Christians first turned to the synagogue as the place to worship. Yet restrictions were obvious.

Jesus' inclusive pattern toward women and other marginalized folk had attracted converts. But synagogues often were closed to women. With more women than men turning to Christianity, an alternative meeting place proved necessary. Former structures were inept, like old wineskins for new wine. House churches met the need—a place to gather, to include, and to proclaim.

For religious reasons, proselytes moved to Jerusalem. Attracted to Hellenist preaching about one God calling all to counter barriers, seekers flocked in. They truly wished to be members of emerging communities.

House groups ministered to the saints, which means **believers** (1 Cor. 16:15). Mutual care fostered high moral standards. People gathered daily to worship, to teach and be taught, to encircle the eucharistic meal. With average homes not large enough, the more well-to-do hosted gatherings. Often known as patrons, many became significant leaders.

Mary—mother of John Mark and cousin of Barnabas, the noted leader at Antioch—offered her home for the Hellenists gathering in Jerusalem. An independent person, Mary willingly risked her property for a group considered fringe. Tradition suggests that Mary's house was the scene of the Last Supper. Mary's giving space speaks to her gift of hospitality. It reflects

her response to having heard and seen Jesus.

But not all proved calm between new converts "come to town" and the Hebrew Christian contingent, gathered around apostles like James. Differences and conflicts emerged. Fortunately, for the gospel's cause, many Hellenists were expelled. These became a powerful missioning source. Many reached out to and received Gentiles. The more we value the multiple results of the many, the more we will welcome diverse missioning efforts today. The more we note how partial our biblical account of the early church is—because it is mostly about only Paul's endeavors—the more we will admit that "the half has never yet been told."

Whenever we read of others' involvement, we can be sure that they too are only typical of the total partnership. Rich traditions were lost. Important material never reached the Acts of the Apostles, because of decisions made. Then, too, some of what did get in has been overlooked. We too easily neglect the 36 people named as Paul's partners. Part of Paul's greatness was his validating those with whom he served. Our weakness is ignoring them while near-idolizing him.

The cloud of witnesses

Let's focus, then, some of the "greater cloud of witness"—those other true apostles who consciously accepted and endured the work and suffering connected with missioning (1 Cor. 4:8-13; 2 Cor. 11-12).

Women Servers

First, what can be reconstructed about the Acts 6 account of the conflict leading the Hellenists to murmur against the Hebrews? Is there more than one option about the widows neglected in the daily distribution or table serving? Whereas we often think that some were not receiving what was needed, were women being skipped in the task of serving? Serving at tables refers to the eucharistic ministry (cf. Martha: Luke 10:38-42). Perhaps the conflict was over authentic partnership, over whether women—duly partners—were passed by as leaders in dispensing the daily eucharist.

Hellenist, or Greco-Roman, women were used to serving festive dinner occasions. Not so the Hebrews. So, as these Hellenist women were being overlooked by those intent on exclusive, male, Hebrew patterns, Hellenists could well have said: "But Jesus did a new thing." Jesus radically included those left

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marginalized in the Jewish scheme of things.

He urged true partnership. To follow him radically means to counter assumptions and structures that invite believers but then tell some that because they are lame, or women, or poor, they may not serve the eucharist or proclaim to others the risen Christ. The same conflict has recurred through the history of missions.

But house churches were settings for poor relief, for encouraging women and men together to practice ecclesial authority, for telling stories. Stories about Jesus. Stories of Jesus that included women's experience.

Traveling Missioners

Traveling or wandering preachers and philosophers were part of first-century life. As early Christians joined the mobile train, they were encouraged to go baggage-free. They expected hospitality from Christians along the way. Jesus, in sending out the twelve and seventy in two's as partners, had established the precedent (Mark 6:7-11; Matthew 10; Luke 9:1-5; 10:1-16).

House church patrons or owners met this need, receiving travelers as they would Christ, or in Christ's stead. Hospitality—part of the medium for church growth—offered the setting for worship and teaching, for common meals, for reading letters from apostles, for mutual encouragement.

Whether in Rome, Corinth, or Ephesus, Prisca and Aquila's house was church center (1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:4-5; Acts 18; 2 Tim. 4:19). Lydia's household welcomed Paul repeatedly to their gathering at Philippi. Apphia—sister and co-worker, in whose home Christians gathered in Colossae—entered with other leaders into discussion about receiving back the runaway slave, Onesimus (Philem., v. 2). Paul sent greetings to Nympha (Col. 4:15), another house church owner in Laodicia.

These cannot be considered exceptions. They are representative of the early missionary movement that expected both women and men to participate and lead. They are women who survived even the canon's androcentric redaction. They are folk who kept the *diakontia* of word and table, preaching and supper, together.

The house-church phenomenon expected women's involvement. In a sense, a public sphere moved into the home setting. Not patterning the patriarchal family, house churches fostered true partnership. Together, believers celebrated the Lord's supper and proclaimed the good news.

Needless to say, the movement proved suspect to onlookers. While some neighbors may have thought the groups gathering were like other social clubs with influential patrons, established state and religious authorities came into conflict with the believers' egalitarian practice.

House churches became the training ground for leadership. Homeowners often became influential. Floyd Filson, writing 45 years ago, noted house church leaders, suggesting that each had "some education, with a fairly broad background and at least some administrative ability . . . 'God-fearers,' who had shown independence enough to leave their ancestral or native faith and establish contact with the synagogues. They had thus shown themselves to be men of initiative and decision" (Filson, 1939:112). Yet, he acknowledged *only* male leaders. To the extent that we are invited to think of only men so involved, we blind ourselves to the women Paul convincingly applauds. That in turn blinds us from expecting and crediting women as partners in leading today.

Scriptural perspective is useful. In many locations, house churches or mission efforts were already functioning before Paul arrived. His visits or work among them offered support and counsel. Yet centers he visited were not dependent on him. Believers shared the tasks of table and word. When conflicts

arose, he sometimes was called on as a consultant as portions of his letters reflect.

Euodia and Syntyche

With the situation at Philippi (Phil. 4:2-3), for example, Euodia and Syntyche—strong women leaders of the group—had evidently developed some differences of opinion between them. This happens nearly every day in mission endeavor. People's perceptions vary; self-esteem is tested or faced; cultural influence presents itself in unexpected detail.

Precisely because of their prominence and influence, Euodia and Syntyche were encouraged to reexamine creatively why they differed. Not that differences are never useful. Not that false doctrine was at stake. Not that either needed to quit her work in the gospel. As Paul said of Timothy, he recognized how these women had labored with him in the apostolic task, how they had been close partners or competitors in the race to offer life.

Euodia and Syntyche—co-mission workers with Clement, plus others deceased—are first to be noted for their authority, their zeal, their contribution to the mission of God. That aware-

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ness affects our understandings. It helps us see Paul's profound sense of joy with the Philippian church.

Vigor at Philippi

We recall Philippian financial support of both Paul and the church at Jerusalem. We rejoice in Lyida, the first European convert. And we say a resounding NO to the *Interpreter's Bible* commentary about the church at Philippi: "It was Paul's first congregation in Philippi. Not a very promising one! All women and no men" (Ferris, 1954:217).

Recall the text: (Acts 16:11ff.). At the important Roman colony of Philippi, Paul and Luke joined the God-fearing women gathered for worship along the river, a short distance outside the city. Notice the details:

- The people had already established the pattern of worshiping together.
- Evidently, fewer than ten men were part of the group, too few for a quorum.
- Nontraditional religious events were less likely to be interrupted or to attract hostile notice if held outside the city.
- Being God-fearers, they were Gentile followers of the Jewish faith, not full-fledged converts.
- Gathering near a river, the worshipers could perform ceremonial washings.

Whether her name was Lydia, an honorable woman from the region of Lydda did business in Philippi as a retailer in the trade of purple-dyed cloth. Purple materials were a luxury item purchased by rich people. Lydia herself was possibly wealthy, perhaps a widow. As Paul sat teaching among those gathered, this merchant woman became convinced of the truth of Christ.

She, along with her household of family with slave and freed women, were baptized. From then on, her home and hospitality were exchanged for the chance to be near and speak with believers from within and beyond the city. Lydia entertained people rather than fear. She welcomed a Jewish rabbi and worshipers into her home. She showed that "to share one's home is to share one's life." For that, we thank her.

Tabitha too

The Acts of the Apostles refers to other representative women. Tabitha's influence comes to mind (Acts 9:36-42). A disciple well known in Joppa (Jaffa), Tabitha died. Because of the authority people extended to her—because of the donations and acts of mercy she offered others, notably widows, and the devotion she practiced as a disciple—the people mourned. They called Peter, nine miles or three hours away, to come.

So impressed with the accounts about Tabitha (Dorcas), Peter was moved to the miraculous. Left alone with her, he prayed. Following his command to "Stand up," she opened her eyes. Helping her rise, he called in those gathered to see that she was alive. The whole of the coastal town heard of this, the first person to be raised from the dead by an apostle. And many Jews believed or came to fuller faith in Jesus the Christ.

Responses follow

Dare we doubt women's influence on the first-century church—as believers, partners, missionaries? Women prophets also emerged, as at Pentecost (Acts 2:9, 16-18). In addition to the 1 Corinthians 11 reference to women prophets, consider Philip the evangelist's four celibate daughters (Acts 21:8). Self-reliant and less-restricted Greeks, these four chose not to marry in order to concentrate in missioning. Prophetic women attracted other women of all classes into churches. They embodied Peter's reminder of Joel's prediction: "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy."

Not unique to first-century experience, men became uncomfortable with, and weary of, women's influence. They came to wish for women to be silent. Although the church's success in minimizing or stifling women's efforts is one of the embarrassing and judgable features of history, God's empowering Spirit in women cannot be quenched. God will not be that manipulated. Devout women of diverse socioeconomic standing—with political muscle and stamina, with vision through study of Scripture, with commitment of true disciples to the central task of proclaiming the good news of wholeness in Jesus the Christ—are not to be blotted out.

The early church missionary movement likely was not patterned as much after the patriarchal household as our own agencies are. Not restricted to work primarily with women, nor primarily to support the "real" men missionaries, nor to supplement the scene with socialized "feminine" traits, women were empowered. Included, they could not help but include. Believing that Jesus had acted in their behalf, they risked the same. Partners in Christ, they were co-ministers. Of this, Paul approved.

Phoebe's model

Consider Phoebe, keeping in mind that she too is representative. Romans 16 is our introduction to Phoebe. Perhaps more appropriately a separate letter (not intended as part of Romans), chapter 16 is Paul's letter recommending Phoebe. A reference for a person not known to the community, probably at Ephesus, we also learn about the eleven women and eighteen men known there to Paul. Those people he hoped would warmly welcome, duly respect, and quickly assist his trusted friend. From Cenchrea, port city of Corinth, Phoebe was going to Ephesus for the first time, a place where Paul had recently spent three years.

Paul identifies three substantive titles for Phoebe: *adelphén*—sister; *diákonon*—minister; *prostátis*—leading officer. Like Timothy, identified as a missionary brother, so Phoebe is claimed as Paul's sister. Known as a traveling companion, or fellow believer, the brother/sister is equivalent to a co-worker (1 Cor. 16:15; Eph. 6:23; Phil. 4:21; Col. 4:15). With reference to task, they are co-workers; with reference to one another, they are brother/sister.

Phoebe is Paul's sister; she has also been a leader of many, including Paul. He hopes the community will respect her influence and needs while she missions among them. A *diákonon* or an official minister of the whole church at Cenchrea, Phoebe cannot be reduced to servant, as some translators do. Of the 21 occurrences of *diákonon* in the epistles, the Authorized Version translates seventeen with the word *minister*, three with *deacon*, and one—this one—with *servant*.

Simply because translators themselves cannot credit a woman as a full-fledged minister, readers are led to minimize them in the early church. That is unfortunate. If Paul could value Phoebe as minister, why need we resist? Further, the term *deacon* of the second-century church—when categories or strata of leadership were being instituted—simply is not adequate for *diákonon* of the first century, where it was a function not associated uniquely with either female or male.

In addition to sister and minister, Paul refers to Phoebe's experience as lead officer, president, or overseer in her congregation. Within the community's leadership and care, she is a person of authority. Perhaps like a guardian for the community or for individuals relating to state. Perhaps as a leader in defense of Paul's gospel and ministry. Perhaps as manager of financial affairs that contributed to his effort. At any rate, helper or good friend are probably deficient interpretations of Paul's intended recognition of Phoebe. How we claim her as a mis-

sionary influences how we recognize present-day missionary women similarly competent.

As for others named in this letter, Paul gives a clear picture of their missionary vigor and commitment: Mary has worked hard among them. Tryphaena and Tryphosa have labored hard on behalf of Christ, as has Persis. Toward the unnamed mother of Rufus, Paul feels like a son.

Where more current debate has been generated is with Junia—co-missionary with Andronicus. All commentators prior to the thirteenth century identified Junia as female and the pair as distinguished apostles. Those who cannot validate women as “sent ones” in the task of founding churches will resort to saying that this person was male. Those free in Christ to expect both women and men to be apostles—to be sent, to bear authentic witness to the gospel of Jesus, to suffer, and to preside at the eucharist (Acts 13:1-2)—will welcome Junia as representative of commissioned early church women.

A feature characteristic of early church missioning is the going out in two's, as partners. Not limited to male/female, or even husband/wife pairs, the idea supports mutual, rather than individualistic, effort. Paul himself, as often portrayed, does not fit this criterion totally. But in this letter on Phoebe's behalf, Paul also recommends Nereus and his sister, Philologus and Julia, and of course, Prisca and Aquila.

Of import is the fact that none of these is identified in the role of husband or wife. Each is a partner committed to the work of telling the good news, itinerating to teach and preach the gospel. Each is comparably significant to the community. There seems to be even no doubt on Paul's part that each is adequately committed to the mission, rather than being distracted with worldly affairs of marriage.

Prisca and Aquila: partners par excellence

A missionary couple deserving fuller attention is Prisca and Aquila. Not limited to the Romans 16 reference, we meet these two elsewhere, always providing a house church. Probably initially, however, they maintained synagogue connections in addition to their house church community.

A financially independent missionary couple, they were both tentmakers. Due to people's mobility and the extensive trade routes in the regions where they were located, tents were in demand—if not for new ones, then for repairs. Financially independent of a local church, Prisca and Aquila revealed the gospel, the news, the truth as they experienced it. And for the mission they suffered. Claudius expelled agitators like them from Rome. They “risked their necks” for Paul, perhaps at the time of the Ephesus riots.

While co-workers with Paul—living together for a year and a half at Corinth and for three years at Ephesus—they remained independent of him. This is a credit to all three. Whereas Paul's focus was ministry of the word, Prisca and Aquila did not divide table and word tasks. They worked at both conversion and community building.

Prisca was probably the woman closest to Paul, his most stimulating colleague. She likely edited (revising as appropriate) all his written letters to churches and carried responsibility for getting them distributed. Some researchers contend that she was the writer of the book of Hebrews. I would like to ask her about that someday.

Without doubt, her abilities were highly respected. Her courageous leadership and remarkable gifts were an asset to Christ's ministry. And that's what matters. She must sob deeply when women today are restricted from expressing their calledness similarly to minister and mission.

Acts 18:24-26 shows Prisca and Aquila engaged in theological instruction of the famous preacher Apollos. Apollos,

from the large Jewish population in Alexandria, was an intellectual, having been cultured in the ancient world's center of learning. Well versed in Scripture, he could uncover Old Testament meanings. He taught and spoke accurately about what he knew of Jesus.

But when he boldly addressed the people at the Ephesus synagogue, Prisca and Aquila noted his major flaw—he knew only the baptism of John. No doubt many followers of John never became disciples of Jesus. Uninformed of the sacraments, the coming of the Holy Spirit, or of salvation through grace, these may not have known that Jesus was in fact the Messiah. They would still have anticipated the fulfillment of prophecy. They failed to know that, on Pentecost, Joel's prophetic work about God's Spirit being poured out on prophetic sons and daughters had been accomplished.

So, Prisca and Aquila—noted for their great power and zeal among the Christians—proceeded to correct the learned Apollos. Not content to let partial knowledge go unchecked, they determined that hearers receive the full gospel.

Refocus on the partnership vision

Herein is the picture I wish for my daughters to see of the early church. This focus on the way women and men together proclaimed, together endured, together shared both bread and Bread is the heart of mission. For this is how I understand Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Bringer of salvation, which is wholeness.

I wish, finally, to credit Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza for her outstanding study of, and writing about, the early church. Her book *In Memory of Her* is especially useful, as are her numerous articles. While I have incorporated learning from others too, I would not wish to tell about either New Testament culture or texts without her help. I conclude with a direct quote from her:

The Pauline literature and Acts still allow us to recognize that women were among the most prominent missionaries and leaders in the early Christian movement. They were apostles and ministers like Paul, and some were his co-workers. They were teachers, preachers, and competitors in the race for the gospel. They founded house churches and, as prominent patrons, used their influence for other missionaries and Christians (Fiorenza, 1983:183).

Galatians 3:28 and the theology it conveyed made clear that all members are partners and one in Christ. All members are entrusted with a message to live and to tell. The misfortune is ours that the precedent of the early church pattern has been distorted through church history. Do we have the vision to retrieve it?

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Mennonite Women and Home Missions

LOIS BARRETT

When Mennonite women were not welcome to minister in their home congregations, they could be missionaries overseas. When they could not vote in "brotherhood" meetings in their home communities, they could participate in decision-making, teach, pray, and serve missions abroad.

Some of the missionaries served in "foreign" fields in North America as well: among Indians—the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Hopi; in cities—in 1920 considered foreign because of the vast numbers of new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe; and in rural mountain missions, among people who were economically poor and culturally different from flatland Americans.

H. H. Van Meter, superintendent of evangelistic work of the Chicago Christian Endeavor Union, was quoted with favor in the Central Conference of Mennonites periodical, *The Christian Evangel*, in September 1910:

The Bible is not only under the ban in our public schools, be it remembered, but is under the same dire influence in thousands of homes of our foreign-born population. To them we are as much bound to take the message of salvation as we are to bear or to send it across the sea to the heathen world beyond, where I myself was born . . . but God has brought a great foreign mission to our doors.

From the beginning of these missions, between 1880 and 1930, Mennonite women, like other Protestant women missionaries, served alongside men. To be sure, few of them preached Sunday morning sermons. But they led Bible studies, called door to door, handled mission finances, worked in medical clinics, visited people in jails and hospitals, and organized Sunday schools.

City missions, like other "foreign" missions, provided a special place for single women. Denied leadership roles in their established Mennonite congregations (or in the home mission churches for ethnic Mennonites), single women missionaries flourished in the city missions.

Catherine Niswander, for example, was in 1914 one of the first missionaries at the General Conference Mennonite mission in Chicago, which later became First Mennonite Church. Through seven ministerial changes in the church, Niswander took charge. She did visitation; she saw to it that there were preachers (men) for morning and evening services; she managed funds and bought a mission house with two apartments.

In Portland, Oregon, where she transferred in 1928, she was the only full-time worker in nine years. An anniversary booklet from the First Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, where she later served, listed her as "superintendent" in Portland. "I did all except the preaching," she said—including janitorial work for the church building.

In Philadelphia she did get a chance for occasional preaching when the minister was out of town. "And so a number of times I had the sermon," she said. "Rev. Plenert told me that one time he had asked a deacon how he liked my sermon, and the deacon had told him, 'It's the best sermon I've heard in a long

time.' Rev. Plenert had laughed, and then the man had said, 'Oh, I don't mean it that way—I mean, of the people we've had to get in to preach.' "

In the Mennonite Church's Chicago Mission, Melinda Ebersole was the first "permanent" worker, serving from 1894 to 1914. Trained as a nurse, she did visitation work, helped with cottage prayer meetings, taught Sunday school classes, and worked in the medical dispensary. In his 1931 history of the Mennonites of Illinois, Harry F. Weber listed her among the ministers.

Many years later, wrote Elaine Sommers Rich in *Mennonite Women* (1983), Bishop A. C. Good remembered how Melinda Ebersole had encouraged him when he delivered his first sermon. The regular speaker for a Wednesday evening prayer meeting had not shown up, and young A. C. substituted by doing an impromptu exposition of a text of Scripture. Afterward, Melinda, whom he called the "mother of the mission," had said to him, "It was a good speech."

Women also found a place in the mountain missions. Nellie Coffman served in West Virginia from 1926 to 1933 under the Middle District of the Virginia Conference. She and her niece, Lora Heatwole, began Bible schools,

visited in the mountain homes, walking miles on the mountain trails, crossing streams on foot logs, and where there were none, took off their shoes and waded through streams. They were often out three or four days eating meals and spending nights in the homes of people who warmly welcomed them. They brought encouragement and hope to the sick and elderly, taught in the Sunday schools, and often planned and conducted evening services (Rich, 1983:164).

Married women were also often granted more responsibility in city, mountain, or Indian missions than at home. Among the influential Mennonite women in Indian missions was Bertha Kinsinger, who went to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) as a General Conference Mennonite missionary in 1896. A college graduate with both a B.A. and an M.A., Kinsinger had studied Latin, Greek, and German, as well as philosophy, calculus, and logic. She went to Cantonment as a teacher of Indian children. One of the first single women to make a career as a Mennonite missionary, she and her friend Agnes Williams, whom she had recruited for the mission field from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, were in charge of the Clinton mission for two years when no men were available for the work. Kinsinger and Williams conducted funerals, preached sermons, and led worship services. Kinsinger visited Cheyenne camps on horseback and later with a small buggy and team.

Kinsinger married Rodolphe Petter, a widowed missionary, with whom she had been collaborating on a Cheyenne-English dictionary. After their marriage and a move to the new Indian mission work in Montana, Bertha continued to assist, protect, and promote Rodolphe's linguistic work. After his death in 1947 she remained on the mission field until her retirement in 1963.

This Golden Age of women missionaries in North America began to fade in the 1930s and 1940s. Funds available for home missions decreased during the Depression. In the General Conference Mennonite Church funds were diverted from the cities to help support ministers from among the new Russian Mennonite immigrants to Canada. In 1942 when a young woman, soon to graduate from Fort Wayne Bible School, applied to the General Conference Home Mission Board concerning missionary work, the board discouraged her, saying, "We have

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only one such [woman] worker, Miss Niswander.”

Since World War II, Mennonite women in home missions have been primarily ministers' wives or voluntary service workers. The voluntary service program, begun with Mennonite Central Committee and the two larger Mennonite conferences soon after World War II, has always had a high proportion of women volunteers, even in years when men were being drafted into alternative service. Especially in summer service programs women predominated, in some years outnumbering men by seven to one.

When women could not find a place to minister at home, they found places of service abroad and in home missions. The

beginnings of the home mission movement among Mennonites provided a context for using women's gifts to minister to the dispossessed, the immigrants, and those of minority ethnic backgrounds.

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This Bag Is Filled with Dynamite: The Story of Elizabeth Foth, Home Missionary

LOIS BARRETT

Elizabeth Foth, born among the Russian Mennonite communities of central Kansas, had wanted to be a missionary to India. But as she felt God's call to city missions, she became the first paid missionary in Altoona, Pennsylvania, under the General Conference Mennonite Home Mission Board.

When Foth arrived in Altoona in 1918, she found a mission already started under the auspices of the nearby rural Roaring Spring Mennonite Church, led by elder Jacob Snyder. A lay deacon, L. L. Shaw, was conducting most of the services in Altoona.

Martha Franz joined Foth in the mission work the following year, and Gerhard M. and Ruth Foth Baergen started in 1921. The mission bustled with Sunday school, Christian Endeavor, Junior League, Bible studies, cottage prayer meetings, mid-week prayer meetings, and distribution of clothing.

In 1921 Foth and Franz expanded their work to Coupon, a mountain town nine miles outside Altoona. Their new project proved controversial. Jacob Snyder began accusing them of claiming their ordinations as missionaries as proof of their right to administer the ordinances of the church. He complained to the General Conference Home Mission Board, of which he was a member, "I am writing this letter in reference to the lady workers on the field, that they may not be able to conduct religious services outside of Altoona and select their own speakers and go around for meetings." At Coupon, Foth and Franz had started a Sunday school and were holding preaching services on Sunday afternoons.

Foth and Franz responded to the charges of impropriety by saying that they had as much right to administer the ordinances of the church as did Shaw, since he as a deacon was not ordained and they were. Yet Shaw had been performing marriages!

In June 1921 the board told the two women to stay in the workers' home in Altoona and stop the services at Coupon. In August the message changed. The board asked Foth to move to Coupon and work exclusively there, while Franz was to stay in Altoona.

Mission board member A. S. Shelly reported on his conversation with Foth:

She said she thought she saw through it all, that it was not so

much that the Board wants her at Coupon as that they want her away from Altoona, and she almost bitterly asked, Why do they want me away? She does not realize apparently, perhaps more really than apparently, that there is any fault on her part, seeing she cultivates a consciousness of following in all things the Lord's leading.

Board member H. P. Krehbiel wrote, "The work cannot continue successfully with two heads. And Sister Foth cannot serve as the head of the work being a woman and not prepared for such a position as that."

The two women refused to be separated, and, in spite of a petition by 169 members and friends of the Altoona church asking them to stay, Foth and Franz left Altoona in August 1922.

Rejected by the mission board, Foth started her own mission work in Brooklyn, New York. In a downtown tenement section, Foth formed a women's Bible class of over 100 members, which grew into a Saturday night mission. By 1929 she had found a site for a more permanent rescue mission—the Hoyt Street Gospel Hall at 215 Hoyt Street in Brooklyn.

A privately published biography of Foth (Kauffman, 1935) devotes most of its fifteen pages to a description of her work at the Hoyt Street Gospel Hall, located in a tough, red-light neighborhood.

Foth had an unshakable faith that God had brought her to that place to minister and that God would protect her, even in potentially violent situations.

At one time, a group of half-crazed and apparently demon-possessed men who were intent on breaking up the meeting, came into the Hall. They had come from a neighboring den of the underworld which was inhabited by whites and blacks alike. The mission staff immediately began to pray for the men, and Miss Foth relates the incident, "The heavens opened and the power of God fell upon us. One of the men began to cry, 'We didn't come in here for this—we came to raise hell!' I told them that they were on their way to hell, and unless they repented and turned to God they would be lost forever! Soon they were calmed by the Spirit, and although they had come to scoff, they remained to listen. Some of the group later came to the altar" (Kauffman, 1935).

Much of the mission's work was with "the fallen women of

the community," and Foth visited not only tenement houses, but houses of prostitution to talk to the women and help them begin a new profession.

One day Miss Foth felt led to visit the woman at the address given her. When the door was opened she was admitted by a man of gigantic proportions—a man known as a "detective." The man resided there and shared in the nefarious profits of the illicit business. When the worker entered the door was bolted behind her, and through a hallway she was led into another room. Again the door was locked. "A strange sensation crept over me," she says, "and I knew that I was locked in a room with a dangerous man. My jail work in Los Angeles had acquainted me with the perfidy of many of these so-called detectives. I realized that I was at the mercy of this man, but the word of the Lord came to me, 'If God be for you, who can be against you?' I knew that every second was precious, so I began to give my message. Suddenly the man arose and angrily stalked toward me. I got up, too, and walking toward him, I said, 'Let us pray!' I dropped to my knees and prayed for the man. The power of God gripped his heart and I saw him literally melt before the Lord. When we arose I handed him a tract and said, 'Forsake your sins and prepare to meet your God!' He meekly bowed his head and replied, 'You certainly are a virtuous woman. I did not expect this.' . . . I started toward the door, and before I reached it, the man ran forward, unlocked it, and proceeded to accompany me to the lower floor."

Six weeks later, after visiting a woman at that house, the same man thanked her for the prayer on his behalf, "I needed it for I am a big sinner," he said (Kauffman, 1935).

On another occasion, Foth escaped from three rough-looking men on a dark street corner by handing them a tract and witnessing to them about the need for repentance of sins.

The man asked her, "Aren't you afraid to be here alone at this time of night?"

Foth replied, "Afraid? Why should I be afraid when the

Lord is standing right here by my side? Besides, this bag is filled with dynamite!"

The man turned the gospel tract over in his hand, "What religion is this?"

"The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ," she said. "If you believe and receive it, you can be made a new man in Christ."

With the man still looking at the tract, Foth walked to the next corner with her tract case in her hand (Kauffman, 1935).

The message Foth preached had a fundamentalist flavor, like that of many Protestant home missionaries in the first half of this century. Foth and many other Mennonites were influenced by their education in the nondenominational Bible institutes—particularly Torrey's in Los Angeles (now Biola College) and Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Foth had attended both.

Her emphasis—more than on forming a church—was on saving individual souls for the life hereafter. In that emphasis she was following the normal rescue mission pattern. What was different about Hoyt Street Gospel Hall was that **she** was superintendent and that other missionaries or mission boards were not restricting her activities because of her gender.

Foth's work later expanded to include Bible classes for Indian sailors from the San Blas Islands, who then returned from New York City to their homeland with the gospel.

Although Hoyt Street Gospel Hall had no denominational affiliation, Foth raised many of her funds from Mennonite churches. During one of Foth's fund-raising visits to a Pennsylvania Mennonite church in 1944, A. J. Neuenschwander, then a Home Mission Board member, heard Foth and her nephew Erwin Wedel speak. Neuenschwander asked Foth whether she felt like cooperating now with the Home Mission Board, since much of her support came from Mennonites.

Foth said no.

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Priorities and Strategies for Development Ministries in the Coming Decade

SARA REGIER

During our time in Botswana we took a trip with three mission executives from South Africa to visit a mission project of the Black Dutch Reformed Church (NGKA) in western Botswana. A Mennonite couple worked there with a Mosutu and an Afrikaaner pastor as a mission team. After a long day of visiting the project and discussing issues, we relaxed in the cool evening air to wait for supper.

One person recounted briefly the history of Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) mission work in Southern Africa. He said, in ef-

fect, that since the coming of the Afrikaaners to South Africa they have always been involved in mission work among the blacks doing educational, hospital, and church work.

They won't deny, he said, that they were paternalistic, somewhat racist, and not always well integrated into the community; their vision was limited, but they were involved. In the early 1950s a new system of government for African reserves was established which took over the responsibility of operating schools and hospitals. Reformed missions were relieved because the cost of maintaining programs and providing workers had been high. Now they could get on with the real work of the church such as evangelism, church programs, and leadership training.

It was on that day, the leader said, that we lost touch with the needs of people. Today we are part of the great sin of apartheid. We lost touch with the needs of people, their interrelatedness to us, and the gospel message. We, as a white,

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wealthy church, sat back assuming the government could do development better than we. We are going to be held accountable before God for this sin.

Lamenting this failure in mission, the mission board of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1985 organized a new department of development. "We don't know where to begin. We're looking for ideas," some of the leaders said. "Mennonites are known for doing development as part of the gospel. What suggestions do you have?"

Sorting through development strands

"Soup, soap, and salvation," "holistic ministry," and "development" are terms which have been used more currently to describe the struggle for an appropriate response to human needs and the distribution of resources. Statistics and documents now abound to challenge the popularity and credibility of the development efforts of the 1960s and '70s. Our mission encounters with people of other cultures, coupled with our involvement, have helped us as Mennonites to maintain a unique perspective and critique of development that is widely respected. The struggles and tensions of these encounters have a lot to teach us as we seek goals and priorities for the coming years.

Rather than priorities, though, I would like to suggest six development strands that need to be woven into the warp and woof of the fabric of our mission outreach. As Nancy Tielkemeier (1983) suggests, these strands need to be woven loosely enough to allow God's Spirit continually to blow through them, yet tightly enough that the challenges of the coming decade do not leave our mission fabric threadbare.

Integration of a biblical Anabaptist understanding of development into mission

Our understanding of development needs to continue to change and grow. We believe that from the beginning God created a people for himself and intended them to be a community which would live under his lordship and be knit together by love and concern for the physical, social, and spiritual well-being of all its members sharing life and the resources of the earth. Jesus' teachings about the kingdom laid the foundation for this understanding. But just how does God work in the world now, and what is his desire for the human future?

Tom Sine (1983), in a review of Mennonite literature on development, notes a strong emphasis on participation of local people in development projects but virtually no reference to God's participation. Our awareness of God's Spirit as being present in nature, the earth's resources, and community dynamics needs to grow.

At our weekly missionary prayer meetings at Nyanga, Zaire, some fifteen years ago, prayers were made for pastors, teachers, and nurses, but SEDA (Mennonite Church development project) extension workers were seldom remembered in prayer. Somehow when it comes to development work we depend on Ph.D.s and professional know-how to guide us and don't expect God to be there. To what extent have we been influenced by contemporary evangelical theology that says it's okay to do development, but it is not really God's thing?

As a church we are still caught up in a dualistic view of life which embraces secular Western definitions of development emphasizing economic growth, nationalism, and personal affluence. We find it difficult to integrate these "secular" development activities into our mission alongside our "spiritual" ministries of evangelism, church planting, and discipling.

Peter Batchelor, who travels over sub-Sahara Africa visiting church-related development projects as a consultant for

RURCON, notes a trend he has observed. Agricultural and development workers are returning to seminary or Bible school for more Bible training. The significance of this trend, he says, is that in the past missions have seen development as technical and not spiritual, whereas workers are now realizing the inadequacy of such a view. Our Western worldview that divides life into categories gives us problems when we open ourselves up to learning and serving in another culture.

Part of our struggle in Botswana to develop the Mennonite ministries model has been for a theology of mission that embraces a biblical Anabaptist understanding of development. Some of our workers, who had been well trained to avoid paternalism and seek grass-roots initiative and participation, were almost paralyzed to inaction when this was not forthcoming in the church where they had been assigned as part of an integrated development team. Other workers on the team believed that witnessing to the good news of salvation and God's intention for the church community could begin even when there is seemingly little outward response. They were eager to begin some kind of regular classes for pastors. We were searching for a theological foundation that could allow both of these strands to be interwoven into a strong fabric.

We missionaries together with national church leaders need to think about development from more of a theological perspective and encourage our seminaries to think theology from more of a development perspective in order to integrate development better into our understanding of mission.

Awareness of the interrelatedness of development and lifestyle

As our Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) priorities emerge we plan to challenge our churches to keep up with the changing realities. Some of the past failures and limitations of development efforts, the complexity of global problems, and the immensity of world needs may well lead our people to accept simplistic answers that could lead to sort of a backlash against the integrated mission understanding we have just been projecting. Some may well say, "Let's get back to basics," meaning preaching and evangelism. Having been in a difficult assignment the past four years, I confess to a kind of despair at times and am tempted to think, "Let's give up on changing society, and concentrate on eternity."

By the media we are bombarded with need and poverty and the disparity in our world; out of compassion we urge for more relief work, which is necessary at times. LIVE AID is an example of this. But neither of these approaches is development. To discard development in favor of evangelism only or move solely to relief is not true to our understanding of wholeness in the biblical context of missions.

We need to challenge our constituency to join in the mission of learning and listening and trying to understand the interrelatedness of our global village. In Africa we have appreciated family members coming to visit workers. Learning tours have increased awareness. When these visitors return to their home congregations they are more aware and enthusiastic because of their brief exposure to work in another culture. The whole question of education and awareness in our constituency must say something about lifestyle. We need to find more ways to build a lifestyle response into our mission.

Advocacy for peace and reconciliation

Workers from those countries where we presently have mission work have highlighted for us some big challenges having to do with development that will confront us in the coming decade. Among those are political upheaval and more totalitarian governments in power, population growth, urbanization, unemployment, and ecological conditions such as pollution, ex-

exploitation of resources, overgrazing, and deforestation.

Our workers in Botswana realize more and more that rather than only sharing technical or agricultural knowledge, their assistance is needed as advocates to help people work through government red tape and injustice, conflicts, tribal rivalry, jealousy, and prejudices. One couple, sent by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to Botswana to drill for water and establish a settlement for Basarawa, an oppressed minority, found themselves spending more time in government offices and district councils securing land and water rights and pleading the case of Basarawa than in drilling for water.

In the popular 1960s and '70s development jargon we heard the proverb: "Give a man a fish and you have helped him today. Teach a man to catch fish and you have helped him all his life." We are realizing that unless that man is guaranteed space on the riverbank along with other fishermen he cannot fish. Robert McAfee Brown (1980:58) declares that being a voice for the voiceless is not adequate. It is not enough to move over to give people space on the world platform; they also need control of the microphone.

In many hungry countries in Africa scarcity of food is not the problem; military and counter-military activity prevents available food from getting to the hungry. Countries spend precious money resources on defense rather than infrastructure and agricultural development. Could our real mission in those areas perhaps be more in peace and reconciliation than in development work? Advocacy, reconciliation, and peacemaking will need to be woven skillfully alongside technical skills in our mission fabric.

Appropriateness of technology and institutions

Brown (1980:97) admits that "maybe small is beautiful but bigness isn't going away." Yet the world's 400 million draft animals furnish nine times as much work as all the tractors of the world (InterTropiques)! The glamor and quick-fix expectations of big technology continue. Initially we often enter a community at the request of people's "felt needs." These needs usually focus on the expectations of technology or institutions—roads, classrooms, clinics, irrigation projects. If we believe development is people-and community-centered, then we need to be honest in expressing our intentions to support and give dignity to low-technology, low-capital kinds of projects which allow people to be part of it and benefit from it.

We need to ask questions in keeping with our original definition of development: What dreams has God given for the future of this community? What is God's will for this society? Where has God been active and what is his agenda here? The church is the one institution where these questions can best be answered. If the church is truly going to be alive and responding to people's needs and bringing salvation, it must move beyond its present institutional walls and respond to poverty, exploitation, and oppression in the community. In some situations new models need to be found that can replace unwieldy institutions. For the middle class and affluent, "appropriate" may mean something different from what it means for the poor.

Cooperation among mission agencies

According to our COM prayer directory, few missionaries are listed as involved in development work. Is this because we are not convinced of its importance, or do we believe MCC can do development work better? Has the difference in emphasis between MCC and our mission boards led to a polarization among our workers and constituency that dichotomizes our mission efforts?

We feel positive about the conscious efforts and prayers that have built bridges of understanding and mutual support

between MCC and COM. Through Mennonite Ministries of Botswana we believe the joint efforts of MCC and mission workers in Bible teaching, leadership training, education, and development have led to a more holistic understanding of mission.

The Council of International Ministries, joint Mennonite retreats in the various regions, recruiters sharing files on new candidates, board visits to both mission and MCC workers in a particular area, and the China Educational Exchange are good models of collaboration. But we will need to push further. The combined pressures of poverty and development needs and revolution raise hard questions of priority for us in mission that can best be answered by a closer working together of the various Mennonite mission and service agencies. John Lapp, executive secretary for MCC, suggests we need to grow in our understanding of a healthy institutional diversity of gifts modeled on Ephesians 4. We need to develop more ways in which COM, MCC, and other mission boards can focus on a region or issue and bring together all expertise, perspectives, and workers in a united Mennonite witness.

Servanthood, learner stance

Tim Lind, MCC co-secretary for Africa, said, "Development is bankrupt." A lot of mistakes have been made in the past decades, and successful projects are few and hard to find. Where, in the face of this fact, do we find reason for hope? This awareness of our failures must lead us to humility and repentance and the realization that we must always remain learners.

More than ever we need to tread softly and work gently as servants among people in the communities where we go to witness in order to listen and learn. We need to think of development projects as signs of the kingdom—as light, as salt, as mustard seeds—and not as great movements (Lind 1985). We are called to live as a faithful remnant in a community of mutual respect.

A Botswana adviser to our Mennonite Ministries program observed, "You lay eggs all over the country but don't stay around for them to hatch." We have been impatient. We didn't think development would take so long. Perhaps too much development work has been planned and done by short-term workers with short-term goals. Might COM want to think seriously of placing long-term missionaries with strong theological understandings of development into our mission areas to give continuity to short-term workers and provide stronger links with the communities and churches where we serve?

Weaving the kingdom fabric

The ideas that have been suggested are not new. They come out of our corporate mission experiences of witnessing, working, and living with people of other cultures. Perhaps in the past these ideas have been more rhetoric and words than actions. We will need to focus on models for implementation in the coming decade.

We still need to develop our weaving skills, learning how to weave loosely enough to allow God's Spirit to blow through our mission intentions. Closely united with national Christians we need to create strong threads of mutual respect and trust so the challenges of the coming decade do not leave our mission fabric threadbare. If we believe God's discerning Spirit is concerned about redeeming people in community, the use of the earth's resources, peace and justice, and appropriate technologies and institutions, then development efforts will be integrated into our mission program—as signs pointing to God's kingdom here on earth.

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In review

Vocabulario Toba. By Albert S. Buckwalter. Sáenz Peña, Chaco, Argentina: Private publication (available from Mennonite Board of Missions), 1980, xvi + 532 pp., \$30

Reviewed by Eugene A. Nida

Vocabulario Toba is an unusually effective lexicographical treatment of an Indian language of South America. Albert S. Buckwalter since 1951 has been a Mennonite missionary among the Toba people with special responsibilities to assist the flourishing Pentecostal churches among the Toba by being their legal representative and by heading the translation of the New Testament into the Toba language.

Buckwalter's unusual oral fluency in the Toba language, his keen sensitivity to cultural values and presuppositions, and his basic understanding of sound linguistic principles have made it possible for him to produce a dictionary of the Toba language which aims primarily to assist Tobas in better understanding Spanish equivalents and secondarily to help Spanish-speaking people acquire a better understanding and appreciation of the Toba language.

This latter purpose in the dictionary has been accomplished by demonstrating the richness of vocabulary and the systematic structure of the grammar. One hopes that this dictionary will at least serve the purpose of removing the tendency of Spanish speakers to depreciate the Toba language as being nothing more than a jumble of strange sounds. Unfortunately, some Toba speakers have themselves come to depreciate their own language in view of this attitude of the dominant Spanish-speaking constituency.

Buckwalter states his purpose and procedures in a brief preface. This is followed by a statement concerning the correspondences in the phonemes of Toba and Spanish and further advice about how one can best use this dictionary, since the Toba language possesses obligatory prefixation for a number of grammatical classes.

The first section of the dictionary consists of a listing of some 8,500 Toba terms for which Spanish equivalents are given, sometimes in terms of a definition, but more frequently in terms of corresponding glosses which provide some idea as to range.

The second part of the dictionary consists of some 5,000 Spanish entries with the corresponding Toba terms, likewise given in most instances as a series of possible glosses. The number of entries could easily be doubled if all of the frequent derivatives were to be included.

The third section of the dictionary consists of a seventy-page sketch of the grammatical structure of Toba with principal emphasis on morphophonemics and morphology.

One of the distinctive features of the Toba-Spanish dictionary is the way in which significant derivatives are listed. For example, for the root *ama* two basic meanings are given: "be sweet" and "to be delicious, tasty." In each case an illustrative phrase is employed to indicate how the term combines with other expressions. These two illustrated meanings are then followed by six derivatives, meaning "his contentment," "his joy," "to cause to be happy," "to be happy," "is being happy," and finally, a phrase of specialized meaning, "sweet mate," a particular herbal drink with sugar or honey. The various derivatives are also listed at other points in the dictionary.

The Spanish-Toba section of the dictionary follows much the same procedure, with somewhat greater attention given to the range of usage. For example, in the case of the Spanish *buscar*, normally glossed as "to look for," eight different corresponding stems and derived forms are listed. This is followed by a number of expressions having highly specialized meanings in which different stems and derivative formations give rise to a series of distinct meanings: for example, "that which one finds in the process of looking for something," "to look for firewood," "to look for water," "to look for honey," "to look for resources," "to try to find something by feeling around for it," "to look

for something by spying," "to look for something by using a light," "to look for something which has been lost," "to look for something at a distance," and "to look for something nearby." All of the corresponding Toba terms are also listed in the Toba-Spanish section of the dictionary.

The grammatical sketch of Toba has been added as an appendix with the modest title "Some Points About the Grammar of the Toba Language." This section begins with some of the phonological difficulties which would typically be encountered by Spanish speakers and then discusses in some detail a number of problems of morphophonemic change.

The statements are clear and well organized, but the orientation of the description is toward the average Spanish-speaking person, who would need to know something about the phonological and morphophonemic patterning of Toba. Special attention is paid to some of the phonological reductions which take place in rapid speech.

The second section of the grammatical sketch deals with the pronominal system, which is unusually elaborate, especially in the third person, where there are six distinct forms for both masculine and feminine third-person singular, and similarly six forms each for the plural masculine and feminine. But there are two different plurals—one plural meaning "many" and a second plural meaning "several"—although there is obviously considerable latitude in the precise range, depending upon what is being discussed.

For the third person the six different forms have basic meanings which refer to the location, position, or movement of a third-person referent, whether, for example, such a third-person referent is "absent," "standing," "seated," "lying," "coming," or "going." But in addition to the meanings relating to location, position, or movement, there are certain other features of meaning. Examples are given.

The verb paradigms become extremely complex since both subject and object pronouns are prefixed to stems, often with

considerable morphophonemic modifications. Pluralization, however, is noted by suffixes. But the verb patterns become very complex in view of the fact that practically all verbs may have added causative formations, both single and double. The resulting forms may be quite complex, for example, *dequi'axanaxanataxan*, which means "he commands someone to give something to someone to eat." Most verbs may also undergo an augmentative formation, indicate movement or position ("there" or "here"), or mark reflexive action.

The noun structure is almost equally complex in view of so many instances of obligatory possession and the fact that almost any form of a verb may undergo nominal derivation, even in the case of double causatives.

The presentation of the grammatical data is primarily in the form of paradigms. But this procedure has been chosen primarily because this would be the one way in which Spanish-speaking people with normal secondary or even university education would be able to understand something of the structure of Toba. A more sophisticated and economical description would be almost totally unrealistic. Unfortunately, little is given about the syntax of the Toba language, except what may be extracted from phrases illustrating various uses for diverse morphological forms.

One could easily criticize Buckwalter for not having included more in the grammatical sketch of Toba and for not having added more ethnographic information for some of the particularly crucial terms touching on Toba values and world view. But certainly what has been done is completely in line with the stated purposes of the dictionary and represents a solid piece of lexicography.

Eugene A. Nida is a linguist, Bible translator, and author with the American Bible Society. This review is condensed from a review prepared for International Journal of American Linguistics, with permission from Nida.

Werven of Sterven. By Leo Laurens. Amsterdam: Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit, 1985, 43 pp.

Reviewed by Roelf S. Kuitse

Leo Laurens is pastor of one of the Mennonite congregations in the Netherlands. For many years he has been the chairman of EMEK, the European Mennonite evangelization/mission committee. In this booklet he writes about the future of Mennonite congregations in the Netherlands.

The church in the Netherlands has to strug-

gle with the growing impact of the forces of secularization. The number of Mennonites in the Netherlands is decreasing. Laurens tries to help the congregations in rediscovering their vision and call and in discerning the problems they have to face.

The booklet is divided into twelve short chapters. Each chapter ends with a few questions for discussion. (The booklet is used as study material in many congregations.) Five aspects of the Christian congregation are emphasized. Worship is central; it is the axle of the wheel. The spokes of the wheel are community and service, witness and justice. One is not without the other. Ecumenicals as well as evangelicals tend to overemphasize certain aspects and to neglect other aspects, according to the writer.

In the last chapters the author—who strongly emphasizes the importance of the local congregation—deals with how to find ways to become a congregation according to the intention of God in the world of today. Cooperation with congregations of other denominations is emphasized as important. This is a well-written, helpful booklet.

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Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation, and the Calvinist Tradition. By Allan A. Boesak, edited by Leonard Sweetman. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984, 160 pp., \$6.95 (pb)

Reviewed by David W. Shenk

This book is powerful! It is an anthology of fifteen presentations by Allan Boesak in various forums, both in South Africa and convocations elsewhere.

Boesak is a black, South African theologian who stands within the Calvinist Reformed tradition. He addresses the issues of apartheid from within the Reformed tradition, a tradition to which the white Reformed Church in South Africa is presumably committed. With forthright clarity, Boesak undercuts the presuppositions of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, using as his truth weapon the very theological foundations upon which that church is founded.

Quoting extensively from John Calvin and other Reformed leaders, the author reveals that Reformed theology and biblical faith are in utter incompatibility with apartheid ideology or the escapist theologies, which suggest that the

church has no right to become involved politically when such injustices occur.

As a Reformed Christian, Boesak believes that all powers and authorities need to be brought under the lordship of Jesus Christ. He does not challenge the cozy relationship between the Dutch Reformed Church and the state in South Africa. His point of consternation is that the church has gone apostate and has ceased to call the state to bring its instruments of justice and political order under the mind of Christ. He believes that when the state betrays its God-given mandate to uphold righteousness and justice, then the legitimacy of that state needs to be called into question.

Boesak looks gingerly at the question of non-violence. Nowhere in the book does he advocate the use of violence in confronting the evil structures in South Africa. This is amazing, noting that he speaks from within the Reformed tradition. In fact, he raises the explicit question as to whether Christians should ever be involved in violent confrontation with evil.

Boesak's hesitancy to condone violence suggests that within the African Christian experience the understanding of the cross does raise serious questions about the appropriateness of Christians ever being involved in violent confrontation with unjust structures. That hesitancy is seldom heard within the context of Western Christianity and rarely within Reformed expressions of Christian faith.

This book is a sad but fascinating prophetic word. It is interesting reading. It is filled with pathos. The pages are interspersed with heart-breaking anecdotes.

As an anthology, the book seems to lack overall cohesiveness. It is speaking specifically to the Reformed churches in South Africa as well as the worldwide family of Reformed churches. Consequently, there are frequent allusions to in-house developments which people from other traditions may not understand.

As an Anabaptist, I wish that Boesak were more aware of the role of the church in many situations being a suffering, redemptive minority. Are the political structures of fallen humanity as redeemable as Boesak hopes? I would appreciate a more explicit theological development of the theme of nonviolence from a New Testament perspective.

Nevertheless, recognizing the theological presuppositions and historical traditions of the Reformed church, I feel that Allan Boesak has done outstandingly in addressing the issues of apartheid and the church/state structure in South Africa from within the framework and the presuppositions upon which that structure stands. He has demonstrated that the theological grounding of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, historically, theologically, and biblically, is utterly incompatible

with the state-church system which the racists in South Africa have devised. He speaks from within their own worldview with clarity and persuasiveness.

I strongly recommend this book for all who share with Allan Boesak the heartbreak and concern for the peoples of South Africa.

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The Wealth of Christians. By Redmond Mullin. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984, 256 pp., \$10.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Calvin Redekop

Although the author does not state it explicitly, it is clear that he considers the economic disparities, and the Christian church's inability to deal with it, one of the greatest problems of our time. A lay businessperson, Mullin starts from the premise that though "most Christians today live in societies which have effectively ceased being christian, and which promote values subversive to Christianity" (p. 9), we are now in a time of greatest opportunity to do something about it. This is based on the fact that the links between the church and state and commercial establishments now are rapidly weakening (p. 10), which should "give the churches a new freedom to assert their integrity, and to work and live out a distinctively christian ethic in their economic lives" (p. 10).

The book contains first an analysis of the origins of the Christian church's attitude toward wealth and poverty. The Greek, Roman, and Jewish teachings on wealth are surveyed too briefly or too extracted at points to gain a good comprehension. The early church position on wealth and poverty is basically a series of generalizations of practice, although in the main it appears well balanced. No one could disagree with Mullin's conclusion that a "follower of Jesus lives a life of Jesus, that every individual life is a further realization of the Incarnation ..." (p. 45). What this means in actual life is not spelled out.

The communal period of the apostolic church is quickly dismissed with "It does not seem possible that this is a complete picture or that it was the only model" (p. 46). I wonder why we continue to evade the implications of that early stance, one which the Hutterites or even the Essenes certainly did not evade.

The chapter on the early church indicates

that the attitudes toward wealth and poverty were unclear; justice seemed to be a major principle in the use of wealth (pp. 54-55). Mullin concludes that charity was a major response which resulted in the great tradition of almsgiving and receiving. Relief for the poor thus became a major institution, resulting in various norms advocating giving of up to 50 percent of one's estate (p. 63). Mullin concludes that the early church did not have any consistent practice in ownership or disposition of wealth.

Part two deals with the developments and applications of the principles derived from earlier times. The author proposes that numerous orientations developed from total poverty and mendicity of some of the religious orders (e.g., Franciscans) to the aggressive pursuit of wealth well-known to all of us.

Chapters 7-9 form the most curious part, for at first glance, Christian philanthropy, Christian charitable organizations, and finance and fund-raising would seem peripheral. However, this oblique way of approaching the problem provides new insights and orientations. "Who is my neighbor?" (p. 105) forces Christians to react, and behavior is often the best indicator of belief.

This section is the best developed in the book and reveals the author's expertise in the field. (He was for many years a fund-raiser for various institutions.) The plethora of charity/alms practices and teachings lead one to the conclusion that poverty has been confronted by Christians in all ages, and the motives for charity in the Christian context are most varied. The tithe and later fund-raising practices speak to the issue of motivation in material possession. Mullin thinks that the Christian tradition presents a confused and often contradictory picture (p. 175ff.).

The only indubitable conclusion is the unusual argument for poverty (p. 179). Mullin proposes that the incarnation is the pivot from which all positions regarding economics and Christianity can be addressed. The voluntary approach to poverty alleviation which has characterized Western Christianity will be not adequate in the future. "Greed ... vicious and immoral is a character of our society" (p. 180).

In fact, Mullin reminds us, in a section where he discusses Marx's contribution, that the voluntary approach to justice is a subtle form of oppression by the powers, be they state or church. The church has been on the side of the "established capitalist order" (p. 201), the Roman Catholic Church being singled out as especially guilty. "In general, the encyclical [he refers to several] promotes the preservation of the existing social order" (p. 202). Christian radicalism of the recent past is more concerned with justice, but hard-core liberation theology is rejected because it presumes a "per-

fectability of temporal human society" (p. 212).

The author maintains that there will be "no liberating theology without the life-giving memory of the suffering of God on the Cross" (p. 212). What is the solution? "As in the primitive Church, Christians must be open to the philosophy, political theory and economic analysis of the time ..." (p. 215). Lay Christianity will allow for "a radical transformation of our economic and political system ..." (p. 219). "It is through the encounter of individuals with each other" (p. 219ff.) that the revolution will come, but the individual must first experience conversion, which makes incarnation possible.

This is an important book. It is well organized and logical. The strength of the historical section and the broad perspectives of original sources make the discussion accessible to the average reader. But how the layperson can be the solution to human selfish desires is not solved. To say that conversion of individuals will snatch the issue out of the vested interests of the established institutions into real life is theoretically plausible.

But the layperson needs to be lodged in some matrix, else he or she too becomes the new class of power. It appears to this reviewer that Mullin has not fully enough understood the dangers of individualism, which is premised on selfish ends. Mullin is really making the case for the ethics of the free church mode, spawned by the Radical Reformation, but nowhere is it even mentioned or developed. An economic ethic which avoids the pitfalls of established institutionalism and unstable individualism still needs to be developed.

Calvin Redekop teaches sociology at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario.

Be My Witnesses: The Church's Mission, Message, and Messengers. By Darrell L. Guder. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985, 235 pp., \$10.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Ben Doerksen

Be My Witnesses, according to the author, "is another book about the church and its mission." But instead of focusing on numerical growth, as many others do, Guder zeroes in on the incarnational dimension of the gospel in developing a theology of mission.

Guder, though Presbyterian by persuasion, received his theological training in Lutheran Germany and brings enriching insights to his

study. His target audience is the educated laity, unordained men and women engaged in active ministry. The content of his book is profound both in scope and depth, yet the style is simple and readable.

Using Scripture freely, Guder traces redemption history from Genesis to Revelation. A basic presupposition is that "God . . . is knowable." In the Old Testament this is evidenced by God choosing Israel as a channel of blessing to the nations. And in the New Testament it is demonstrated more dramatically in the incarnation of Jesus and in the sending of the Holy Spirit.

Guder refers to the present institutional church as in "cultural bondage," and as "an amputated Body of Christ if we neglect or intentionally set aside any part of the proclamation." For the church to become effective in its witness it must incarnate itself. "The Gospel needs to be enfleshed in the sayers."

Guder emphasizes three aspects in the Christian witness: being, doing, and saying. The *kérygma* is closely linked to *koinonía*, the community providing the incarnational means for the *kérygma*. Likewise the *diakonía* must be linked with the witness who becomes the incarnation of the good news.

Guder contends that the church needs a tabernacle mentality instead of the temple mentality many churches are presently developing. We need to program and strategize for those outside, not for those within.

Be My Witnesses is refreshing and stimulating, and though Anabaptist readers may not fully agree with all of Guder's positions, they will appreciate his tolerance and generosity for those of other persuasions.

Ben Doerksen is Director of Missions at the B. I. Institute, Hepburn, Saskatchewan. He earlier was a missionary to Nigeria.

Christian and Islam: The Struggling Dialogue. Edited by Richard W. Rousseau, S.J. Montrose, Pennsylvania: Ridge Row Press, 1985, 225 pp., \$17.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Peter M. Hamm

This collection of essays on Islamic-Christian dialogue by both Christians (including Roman Catholic and Protestant) and Muslims is bound to tantalize the novice and adept alike in its broad sweep of the historical, theological, and methodological aspects of the subject. A helpful introductory chapter provides a concise summary of the twelve chapters and ventures some astute conclusions on the theoretical and

practical dimensions of the Muslim-Christian encounter.

In chapter one Wilfred Cantwell Smith examines the underlying presuppositions of the classical stances of dialogue, concluding with the new approach of theological convergence. He provocatively maintains that Christians have always been Muslims, consecrating themselves to God's Word and truth, and Muslims have always been Christians, that is, followers of Christ; hence, both are to be understood as elements of a dynamic whole.

While Smith in his typical fashion creatively proffers new insights, these insights tend to blur traditional views on Muslim-Christian distinctives. Heretofore, histories of Muslim-Christian relations have been written by those outside of one of the two traditions, rather than affirming both, or being part of a larger total complex.

Helpful for any serious dialogue is Jacques Lanfrey's examination in chapter two of obstacles that both Christians and Muslims must overcome. Lanfrey is confident that their dedication to a common God will help all to overcome their difficulties in order to achieve God's common purpose. Indeed, rather idealistic.

One such common doctrine, enlarged upon in chapter three by Maurice Barrman, concerns the mystery of the one God: the ways of knowing God; belief in the existence of one God, who is Creator, who loves humankind, who is merciful and pardons, and who is worthy of being praised and glorified; a belief in a God who has sent prophets and who raises the dead; and a belief in a life of faithful adherence to God's will, notably by concern for the neighbor. Both Christians and Muslims, thus, face a common challenge from an unbelieving modern world, and this should prompt cooperative efforts to protect life and promote justice.

To understand the Muslim perspective to dialogue, an older essay (1971) by Mohammed Talbi is included. Delineating the purpose of dialogue to remove barriers between Muslims and Christians and to increase good in the world by free exchange, he identifies some common misconceptions about Islam and suggests the following conditions for fruitful dialogue: avoid polemics and proselytism, recognize that arguments do not produce conversion and that there is an apostolate for both sides, and realize the multiple ways of salvation. Certainly at variance with the traditional Christian approach, Talbi makes a strong case for both tolerance and loyalty to one's own tradition.

Chapters five through ten contain reports of Muslim-Christian relations in Britain (by Penelope Johnstone), the Philippines (the Marawi report), and Nigeria (by Joseph Kenny), and Muslim-Christian dialogue from

1968-1978, congress in Spain in 1977, and in Sri Lanka in 1982. The final two chapters report on recent statements issued since Vatican II by Roman Catholics and by the World Council of Churches in Mombasa in 1979.

Those who believe that Muslims must hear the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ and, consequently, engage in mission to Muslims will have some reservations about numerous emphases of this collection of essays. This in no way lessens the significance of these essays for a better understanding of the intricacies, sensitivities, and methodologies for a fruitful Christian-Muslim dialogue—even with the ultimate intent of conversion.

Peter M. Hamm, Winnipeg, Manitoba, is Secretary for Asia/Africa/Europe for Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services. He earlier taught at Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg.

Missionary Kid—MK. By Edward E. Danielson. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1984, 104 pp., \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Aldon Poetker

"We would consider missionary service, but our kids need us now. They are in good schools and have good friends. A healthy, secure family environment is important, so we'll probably wait for missionary service until our children are older and more independent."

"We have been appointed to a mission assignment. We're excited about this step in our lives, but we're concerned about our children's adjustment to this big change. What should we anticipate and prepare for in terms of their care? What are their education options? Will they need to attend a boarding school? What are boarding schools like?"

If you can identify with these feelings or questions, Edward Danielson's book on missionary children is recommended reading. It is a brief but informative, perceptive, and challenging look at missionary children, particularly with respect to their education.

Danielson has had extensive experience in Christian boarding school settings and is convinced that these schools are not contrary to scriptural teaching about child care and rearing. Focusing primarily on these institutions, he draws on the perspectives of missionary children themselves vigorously to defend the value of these schools and to provide practical insights into their setting, structure, and operation. Recognizing that boarding school is not

for all children, a brief discussion of alternative educational options is also provided.

Danielson offers practical guidance on preparing children for boarding school and maintaining contact with children in school. He also provides insight into the influence of boarding schools on missionary children and their interpersonal relationships. The book concludes with a brief discussion of the challenges that face missionary families on their return to their country of citizenship.

Though Danielson effectively argues for the strengths of traditional boarding school education, he does not address significant changes which have recently occurred in many of these schools. Emphasis on the indigenization of mission and withdrawal of missionaries have impacted the character of some boarding schools. Ideal home-style boardings for missionary children are fewer. Where missionary children are no longer a majority they are part of an international student body. With teachers and students of a pluralistic character, schools that once had a strong Christian

identity are seriously challenged to maintain that identity. Though one can see both strengths and weaknesses in this trend, it nevertheless demonstrates that the ideals of the past are not necessarily the alternatives of the present. A resurgence of mission activity in this decade may revive interest in boarding schools.

Danielson describes his book as "a handbook with practical suggestions for missionary candidates and parents." As such it is a valuable resource for missionary preparation.

Aldon Poetker is a student at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California. Earlier he served in India.

Unfinished Agenda: An Autobiography. By Lesslie Newbigin. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985, 263 pp., \$11.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Franz Rathmair

In this book the Scottish missiologist, outstanding church leader, and author describes the journey of his life. This story is fascinating and displays a character deeply committed to Christ, the unity of his body, and the missionary mandate of the church.

The journey brings Newbigin from unbelief to an unceasing discipleship ever since his engagement with the Student Christian Movement in Cambridge. Forsaking other plans, he follows God's call into full-time ministry. His theological training causes him to turn from a liberal to a more evangelical position—without lessening his commitment to political and social issues. Together with his wife, Helen, daughter of missionaries to India, he goes exactly to that subcontinent and spends 38 years there. The transition period from the British rule to independence sees Newbigin deeply involved in uniting Presbyterian, Methodist, and Anglican churches into the Church of South India. As bishop of this church he develops a vision for strong indigenous churches both in rural areas and in the city.

Yet the journey includes more than that. Newbigin becomes involved in the emerging World Council of Churches and plays a crucial role in the integration of the International Missionary Council into the WCC; finally, he is the first director of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism. He travels extensively and has significant encounters with church leaders in all parts of the world.

After retiring from the work in India the journey is not finished. Newbigin teaches theology of mission and ecumenical studies in Birmingham before he is installed in 1980 as

pastor of a twenty-member inner-city church—a position he holds today, at age seventy-six.

This autobiography helps one to look at missions and the ecumenical movement through the eyes of a man who loves God and his Word. It reveals his personal struggles and development to interpret the Christian faith in changing situations in many parts of the world. Newbigin's life and work challenge the Western church which has too easily identified itself with the established order.

I recommend this book, especially to those who tend to criticize or reject ecumenism. Though perhaps not agreeing with every aspect of Newbigin's theology, we will gain a deeper appreciation for servants of God who are committed to foster the visible unity and the mission of God's people.

Franz Rathmair is a student at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California. He was from 1979-85 pastor of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Steyr/Austria and active in the Austrian/Bavarian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.



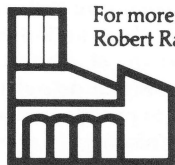
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Editorial

Mission is the call to preach as well as practice the gospel. Sometimes it seems easier to do the former than the latter. In other situations we discern demonstration to be the only permissible form of communication. Whatever the external circumstances, our words are constantly being measured against our actions, and our attitudes convey the essence of what we are.

Whether we study the story of the first Christians or explore the growth of the church through mission in the nineteenth century, we discover the dynamic of the gospel always outruns the forms and formulas which the apostles employ. Jesus used a series of metaphors to describe the meaning of God's rule. One of the most suggestive was that of the yeast. Yeast becomes an active ingredient which transforms; it exercises a pervasive influence within the dough. It works silently but powerfully.

Any culture can become host to the gospel, but once the gospel yeast is released into a culture it will not leave that culture unchanged. If the gospel is allowed to do its work, it will transform those elements in a culture which enslave men and women and which deface the image of God in human beings.

The great struggle in the early church concerned the place of Gentiles among the people of God. Paul argued that the cross challenged ordinary human ways of looking at these matters. God in Christ created a new unity. All human distinctions are overcome.

Where God's reign is being lived out new patterns emerge. No hierarchy of value may be used to judge one another. Images of mutuality, interdependence, mutual submission, and partnership replace self-sufficiency, superior-inferior, and servant-master relationships.

The missionary movement in the nineteenth century displays the same underlying trust. The gospel calls for an inversion of the old order. Frequently this happened to a degree and in

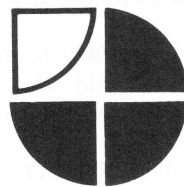
ways that the missionaries never anticipated. In some cases, far more of the gospel was apprehended than the missionary intended, or it spoke to a particular situation in ways never expected. One reason why messianic or millenarian movements, many of which have emerged in response to the gospel as introduced by the missionary movement, have proved so worrisome is that they were so unpredictable and radical. The gospel opened vistas of new possibilities of those hearing it for the first time—and often in situations of oppression and hopelessness—so that they were energized to attempt extraordinary things.

The thrust of the articles which comprise this issue of *Mission Focus* is toward partnership in the gospel. We are confronted with experiences in which a person's Spirit-given gifts were not respected—causing loss both to the individual as well as the church. But we also meet examples of mutual respect and interdependence. The gospel promises a new way of living which some dare to appropriate.

The call to discipleship is the call to live shalom. We may discount the possibility of realizing shalom in our world today. But the vision of what God has promised in Christ keeps breaking in to our mundane existence. Salvation means the new and right way of living.

Over the centuries Christians have found any number of ways to reduce the gospel to fit our categories or package it in ways that suit our tastes. But because it is the gospel it is God's power at work in human experience smashing the prisons of caste, class, and custom which we have artfully devised to control one another. The apostle Paul gave expression to his confidence in the gospel: "I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation" (Rom. 1:16a). In affirming this we may well be claiming more than we know. That is both the mystery and challenge of the gospel.—Wilbert R. Shenk

MISSION FOCUS



The Biblical Mandate for Theology of Presence

RICHARD C. DETWEILER

The clarity of the biblical mandate for God's people to be not only a presence but **his** presence in the world is impressive. Biblical history and the revelation of God's intention for the world and his people in the world provide us a fivefold mandate: (1) why we are to be the reflection of his presence, (2) who we are to be as his presence, (3) how we are to express his presence, (4) where we are to be as his presence, (5) the way to become his presence. In conclusion, some application will be made to presence in restrictive situations.

Why we are to be the reflection of God's presence

It may seem presumptuous or misusing the concept of divine incarnation to speak of **being** God's presence in the world rather than our being the **context** for his presence. But the beginning mandate for presence is the intention of God to reveal himself in humankind as a creation in his image so that his glory might fill the earth. The call to represent God's presence arises not only in the context of redemption but is manifest already in creation.

The mandate of creation was to "be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28a, NIV). That command was not designed to fill up space usefully and to maintain an orderly life, but that in the psalmist's refrain, the whole earth might be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the seas.

The original basis, then, for a theology of presence is the purpose of God in creating humankind in his image, that is, to endow the capability of reflecting God's self-revelation.

Humankind failed in responding to that opportunity. So biblical history is a narrative of how God maintained and in fact further enhanced his intention of self-revelation through creating a "people called by my name." The redemptive process is that of restoring the image of God to visibility in the world so that people may know him and respond to his purposes.

The covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Israel

pointed toward fulfilling the intention of God to bless the earth through the response of those called to reflect his self-revelation. They were to be the image of God's presence by representing his life and declaring his deeds among them.

The covenant with Noah repeated the creation mandate, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth" (Gen. 9:1). It included dominion over the earth and underlined how life was to be lived with the reason that "... for in the image of God has God made man" (6b).

The well-known covenant with Abraham again was a call to fruitfulness through increase and the promise that the outcome would be the blessing of all nations (Gen. 12:2-3; 22:17-18).

Moses was assured that God would redeem Israel so it would be known that Jehovah is God (Gen. 5:7-8; 7:5). Israel's obedience to God's commands was to be a response to his making himself known to them as "the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt ..." (Exod. 20:1). They were to be the people among whom God had chosen to "place his name," a new variation on his intention for his creation to be "in his image" and "to make his name known" (Deut. 12:5, 21; 1 Kings 14:21; Ps. 76:1-2; 2 Sam. 7:23; 1 Chron. 17:20-23).

The mandate for God's presence is fulfilled in the Son, Jesus Christ, who is presented as the "exact representation of [God's] being" (NIV) or the "express image of his person" (KJV) (Heb. 1:3). The purpose of that incarnate revelation is that we might become "conformed to the likeness of his son" (Rom. 8:29) and, so being, are restored to fulfilling God's purpose in the world. The self-revelation of God is to be manifest in his creation of a new people in the likeness of Jesus Christ. The creation and redemption mandates are one. "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" has the same ultimate purpose as, "Go and make disciples of all nations," namely, to fill the earth with the glory of the Lord as imaged in his creation responding to his will.

Who we are to be as God's presence

The biblical mandate indicates what our identity is to be as those called to be representative of God's self-revealing presence. We are to reflect the nature of God and God's will for humankind and for the earth.

This again is shown in creation as God mandates human

responsibility. Responsible identity with God is emphasized further in the callings of Noah and Abraham and then set forth clearly in God's command to Israel, "Be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy" (Lev. 19:1).

The mandate to identification with God is essential to his people being representative of his presence in the world. That is amplified in Jesus himself and his defining who the people of God are to be.

To have seen Jesus is to have "seen the Father" (John 14:9). The children of God are to be of his nature (Matt. 5:48). Their life is "to glorify [reflect the nature of] your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16, KJV). We are to be as those who are "participants in the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). Christian believers are a "chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

One of the most challenging New Testament declarations is the apostle John's word, "... in this world we are like [God]" (1 John 4:17). That is in tune with the apostle Paul's statements that we are in the world in Christ's stead (2 Cor. 5:20) and that we are the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing" (2 Cor. 2:15). It rings with Jesus' prayer that believers "may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you ... that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21).

In short, the nature of the presence of God's people in the world is to represent the nature of his self-revelation, especially as declared in Christ. The biblical mandate for presence is inextricably bound up with the mandate for God-identity in Christ to be exemplified in the nature of believers' lives.

How we are to express God's presence

The God-presence as revealed in Scriptures is to be expressed in his people in four dimensions—physical, moral, social, and spiritual.

Physical expression

The Christian theology of presence is oriented to earthly expression. God is one who walks in the garden and is concerned for the care of the garden, one who involves the earth in the judgment on the Fall and provides for its re-creation in the purpose of redemption.

Even more important, God's intention for humankind is expressed in the context of physical existence. The body is respected in the Old Testament as worthy of deep regard for health and well-being as witnessed by the divinely institutional health codes and practices of Israel. The laws insist upon the relation of physical wholeness with tabernacle worship acceptability. Material blessing is the sign of God's manifest presence, and virtually all of the Old Testament promises of life are couched in terms of earthly expectations.

The New Testament does not retract the Old Testament mandates that call for the expression of God-presence in physical terms. Rather, the incarnation, ministry, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus raise the earthly orientation of God's self-revelation to a new level and call for Christian expression in "flesh and blood." The body is regarded as the temple of God through which to glorify him (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:19-20), a living sacrifice by which to serve him (Rom. 12:1), a vessel of sanctification for divine indwelling (1 Thess. 5:23), and the ultimate object of resurrection and new creation (Rom. 8:23).

Jesus' ministry is oriented to earthly life existence (Luke 4:18-19). The fulfillment of the promises of God in New Testament interpretation are no longer couched in the expectations of material blessing. However, Jesus and the New Testament

writers point to participating in the ultimate goal of wholeness for humankind by Christians sacrificing their physical and material well-being for the redemptive welfare of others (2 Cor. 8:9). They thereby refocus the perspective of material blessing as a challenge for sacrifice and contribution rather than an expectation of reward.

It is appropriate, for example, for Christians to be good farmers as an expression of redemptive wholeness of life or to consider other vocational pursuits as ways to incarnate God's presence in the world. The mandate is, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

Moral expression

A second dimension of presence is expressed in the moral mandate. Noah's preservation was to renew the moral existence of humanity. Abraham's call was to come out of a pagan world to learn a new way of life. Israel was to be set apart as a people reflecting a nature of life contrasting with other nations. Jesus introduced and taught the life and ways of an upside-down

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kingdom, and Paul reminded Christians that their coming to know Christ oriented their life to another lifestyle (Eph. 4:17-20).

To be holy as God is holy is the mandate to express his character of righteousness, love, and justice in a this-worldly incarnation of the presence of God.

Social expression

That leads to a third dimension of God's presence, the social mandate. In the Scriptures the physical and moral aspects of reflecting the image of God are normatively expressed in socially related contexts and purposes and exceptionally as a private mandate.

Abraham is called in anticipation of the forming of a people of God. Israel's creation as the locale of God's name and revelation is a corporate existence, and the Commandments are so oriented. The Jubilee concept is designed to maintain an earthly expression of the divine intention for human existence. The prophets' expectations of the manifestation of God's revelation is the vision of a new community. Jesus calls forth his band of disciples and promises that the coming of the Holy Spirit will inaugurate a new manifestation of his presence in the body of believers and will provide his gifts for the creation of the church and its redemptive life and witness in the world. The mandate for the witnessing presence of the church in the world is consistently given in communal terms.

Spiritual expression

But in all and through all the physical, moral, and social incarnate expression of God's presence is the transcendent dimension of God's mystical presence that characterizes the Christian community. A biblical theology of presence recognizes that the representation of God in his people is a spiritual mandate. That is, it exists only in union with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the active presence of the Holy Spirit. God's presence is not that of a once-removed humanistic nature but is a transcendent immediacy, though expressed eminently in physical, moral, and social modes as well as in mystical awareness. Therefore we are to pray in the Spirit, to be open to the gifts and direction of the Spirit, and to anticipate the reality of Jesus' presence with spiritual perception.

Where we are to be as God's presence

The biblical theology of presence moves progressively from inward to outward settings.

The Old Testament is a story of God's calling of a people to come out of the world and into his presence, ultimately to be near him in the holy of holies where his glory rested. The very movement of tabernacle worship was from the altar outside the tent to the holy place and then to the most holy behind the veil. The camp of Israel was gathered around that location of the Shekinah glory and moved with it as the cloud lifted and guided the way. Israel was led into Canaan and consolidated as a nation in the midst of the nations. Presence was geographically prescribed, socially limited, and internally oriented.

The purpose, however, was to prepare God's people for outward movement beyond geographical location, national and ethnic boundaries, and internal orientation. The presence of God in his people is to be "in the world." In contrast to the inward tabernacle movement, Hebrews 13:12 pictures Jesus suffering "outside the camp" and calls us to join him there. The high priestly prayer of Jesus (John 17) moves from the call, "out of the world," to being sent "into the world." God's people are to represent his presence where Jesus is as they witness to him in Jerusalem, Judea, and to the ends of the earth.

The mandate for presence is dynamic. That was already indi-

cated in the Old Testament. God assured Moses that "I will be what I will be" as Israel was led through their pilgrimage (Exod. 3:14, "I am that I am"). Jesus' promise was to be with those who go into all the world (Matt. 28:19-20). Paul pictured Christ as the "rock that followed" Israel through the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:4).

The people of God are to be separate in nature but actively present in love to the word and deed. "Come out from among them and be separate" is linked with, "Follow me" into the world, carrying the cross.

Presence is to be evident in the worshiping body ("God is really among you," 1 Cor. 14:25). We are to "stand before kings" in bearing notice of the reality of Jesus as Lord. Presence is to issue in witness. "As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and judgment to come, Felix was afraid . . ." (Acts 24:25). Christians are to exhibit a manner of life that impacts their society. "Live such good lives among pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good works and glorify God on the day he visits us" (1 Pet. 2:12). To do so means to be salt and light, in touch with the life of the world, and seen as a new way (Matt. 5:14-15). Persecution is not to be evaded but accepted as opportunity for exemplifying the redemptive love of God (1 Pet. 2:21).

The way to become God's presence in the world

For us to become the presence of God in Christ, the need for receiving the transforming and empowering activity of the Holy Spirit must be recognized (John 14:15-21; 16:12-14; Acts 1:8). The concept of presence finally rests on whether the reality of Jesus Christ is alive and evident in the Christian body of believers (1 Thess. 1:6-10). The authenticity of presence as faithful witness is validated by whether life and word are seen as joined in living union with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (Rom. 6). Only then will the dry bones live. "But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us" (2 Cor. 4:7). "We always carry about in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body" (2 Cor. 4:10-11).

The heart of the biblical theology of presence is always a "dying and rising with Christ," a "taking up the cross," and "walking in the resurrection." Proclamation then becomes speaking of a reality which is not only a historical event but a present manifestation of God's self-revelation. In other words, the presence of God must be a present God. The forms of that presence are multiple, but they come primarily through the incarnation of Christ in those who have been re-created to be the image of God by which he seeks to make himself known in the world. The biblical theology of presence is an eschatological reality in the Christian community as it lives in its place in the world. "Dear friends, now we are the children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

The biblical mandate as applied to presence in restrictive situations

The people of God in the biblical narrative were usually in restrictive situations, so all that was said about presence and witness is applicable to today's world.

Israel in Egypt was to trust that God is mindful of the needs of his people and will vindicate their trust in him if they will "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." Their witness was to act in faith obedience as in their carrying out the first Passover rites in anticipation of their deliverance, in willingness

to take the risk of entering Canaan and of relying on Jehovah as king of their nation in the midst of surrounding nations with their kings.

Israel's mandate for witness as presence was to live as a unique people amid the constant threat of the horses and chariots of the nations surrounding them. Insofar as they committed themselves to that faithfulness to God, he became known to the nations by his mighty acts in behalf of his people.

In exile, the people of God raised the question, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" The mandate again was faithfulness to Jehovah as Lord, which was brought to the test in such exilic situations as faced by Daniel, Esther, and others. The pattern was to participate in the affairs of the nations in which they were captive, where there was such opportunity, but to maintain at whatever cost their first loyalty to Jehovah in their worship and life practices.

The prophets exhorted the nation by proclamation but became symbols of God's presence and will by their steadfastness in standing against the tide by their acts as well as prophetic word. The fact that Jeremiah bought land when Israel's enemies were at the gates was such an act to testify to the future of Israel in God's promise.

The Sermon on the Mount is a constitution for new kingdom life as a counterculture contrasted with general society. Jesus' people are to demonstrate a new way that points to a true recognition of God in the world of pressures that mitigate against love, justice, and holiness. The negative mandate throughout the Gospels and Epistles is, "Do not as the Gentiles do." The positive side of the same mandate is to love one's neighbor as oneself. Followers of Jesus found themselves in the paradox of the command to be in the world but not of it. This was applied also to religious structures that facilitated violations and misrepresentations of God's will.

The infant church faced restrictive situations of both re-

ligious and secular kinds. The active result was persecution as Christians took the stance, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Persecution was not to be accepted as "some strange thing" (1 Pet. 4:12) but was to be expected by those called "not only to believe in him but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29).

As a "scattered abroad" people, Christians were to form believers communities in hostile settings and to become both nurturing and evangelizing bodies with primary emphasis on the quality of their life together in Christ as the source of their witness. The settings of religious hostility, political pressure, intellectual skepticism, and social stratifications were challenges rather than deterrents to Christians representing by their example the transforming impact of the gospel.

Jesus' messages to the churches of Asia Minor in John's Revelation were a powerful mandate to witness "unto death" in anticipation that victory would be forthcoming by the word of testimony and faithfulness of life loyal to Jesus' lordship.

The New Testament does not seem to lift out restrictive situations as special settings for witness by presence but assumes these situations to be normative. Perhaps we should consider whether our problems of discerning faithfulness in witness arise in part because we no longer anticipate the norm of restrictive situations and seek to shape the mandates of biblical witness to favorable settings.

If so, then basic to our discernment of the meaning of presence is to hear more seriously the call of Jesus to take up the cross and follow him. For the key to being as God's presence in the world is to be where Jesus is and as he is. That inevitably will lead us to confrontation with evil and into brokenness of life where only the wholeness of Jesus and his salvation can bring restoration and new creation, wherein the promise of the Jubilee year becomes a beginning reality until all things are fulfilled in the new heaven and new earth.

A Theology of Presence: Implications for Mission

CALVIN E. SHENK

In biblical history God was present among the called-out people. God was present with Israel. God's people—a kingdom of priests and a holy nation—expressed God's presence among the nations so that they might discover that renewing presence. With the coming of Jesus Christ, God's presence was even more apparent. As Jesus shared fully in human existence, his presence—what he was, did, and said—elicited a response so that men and women discovered more vividly what God is like. Since the ascension of Jesus, God is present through the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers and in the new community. It is now the responsibility of believers and the believing community to express God's presence as clearly as possible through the enabling of the Spirit.

Theology of presence

The missionary dimension

An understanding of Christian presence takes seriously the

church as people of God, those who image a kingdom. Believers are a sign of the kingdom. Presence is concerned with the missionary **dimension** of the church, not just the missionary **intention** of the church. A theology of presence which takes dimension seriously is integrally linked with a theology of discipleship. Such presence models following "in the way" and gives major emphasis to how one lives as a Christian.

It is important to keep a dynamic and creative tension between dimension and intention so that they nourish and stimulate each other. Intention is possible only as it emerges from dimension, for without dimension intention quickly dissipates. The presence of the discipling community is, therefore, part of the gospel, not something additional or peripheral.

In Acts 2 the new life of the community attracted the attention of seekers. Without those Christian characteristics the spoken message would have been deficient, lacking credibility. Presence insists that believers be concerned with what the church **is** and **does** before being concerned with what the church **says**. It calls for the holism of the gospel. Christians acknowledge with gladness that in the *kérygma* (declaration of the gospel) the faith is **taught**, but they cannot separate that from the *koinonía* (community) through which the faith is

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caught. Presence helps the church avoid a disjunction between the Spirit-embodied community and the Spirit-directed word.

Several years ago while teaching in a Keystone Bible Institute, I was expressing my convictions about the Vietnam nightmare when a woman whose husband had been in the American military in Vietnam at the time I was referring to confronted me about my peace convictions. She expressed her problems with Mennonite peace theology but noted that she was involved in a Mennonite church because of the loving community she discovered there. This was a confirmation of Christian presence through the dimension of community even when words became a stumbling block.

More than action and word

When we clearly understand the power of presence, we are not satisfied with a definition of mission as only action or word. This is difficult for Westerners to learn because our tradition has taught us to act decisively and to formulate carefully. It is easy for us to creedalize or institutionalize the vision. Can we learn to communicate relationally before we communicate rationally? In the New Testament confessions were verbalized after encountering Jesus. We are so idea-oriented that we spend little time pondering the quality of our presence.

The West should learn from some Eastern churches here. On several occasions I have been impressed with, and blessed by, the quality of Christian presence in the Coptic Church of Egypt. Recently I heard a pastor in Jordan describe the church's mission in a Muslim environment as "living in a glass house." We are learning that the church in China has by its presence been an effective witness; as a sign of the kingdom, it pointed to a transcendence beyond ideology.

Foundation for mission

Christians are not free to choose or reject a theology of presence. It is not just one of the options if no other options are available. It is not limited to restrictive situations where action and word are severely limited. Presence applies to all societies, whether open, hostile, or apathetic to the gospel.

Presence is the foundation for action and word. Presence is the most difficult form of witness, for it affects the credibility of the act or word, either positively or negatively. Presence defines the basis on which one begins, not the limits of what can be done as appropriate opportunity presents itself. Presence does not by definition exclude explanation of action or proclamation of word. Verbalization can be part of presence. Indeed, one can verbalize with greater credibility as one is authentically present. But a presence theology cautions one against over-verbalization or prostitution of verbalization. It is not a question of being verbal or nonverbal but what one verbalizes and whether the word has integrity with one's life.

A theology of presence is not an attempt to diminish the place of evangelism in inviting people to consider who Jesus is and become his follower. People are not saved just by recognizing Christ's presence through us; they must meet and respond to him. Presence can then be a vital part of evangelism. The ultimate vision for presence is that men and women might discover Christ's presence and receive that presence into their lives. We are not disinterested in their response; we wish they would join with those in whom Christ is present. When people discover the presence of Christ, they cannot remain neutral indefinitely; a decision is required. Some will come into a viable relationship with him.

From one perspective, presence is pre-evangelism because it enables people to meet and acknowledge Jesus. But to define presence as only pre-evangelism is too limiting. Presence is witness, whether it leads to evangelism or not. Presence is not valid

only if it is an instrument in obtaining a particular result. One should not insist that presence is the first link in a chain and is authentic only if all the other links (action, proclamation, evangelism) are clearly visible at the beginning or following sequence. In that case, when the other links cannot be guaranteed, presence is given low priority and is practiced—as a last resort—only if nothing else is possible. The validity of presence must always exist apart from whether other forms of witness can follow. Presence is indispensable because it is foundational. One cannot separate word from life or action from life and remain biblical. God's presence must permeate our being, acting, and speaking. Presence is a foretaste of the one reality to which people are invited and provides a context in which that invitation can be understood.

Recently a refugee couple from East Asia wished to become members of the local church because they were impressed with the quality of community they had experienced. To test their understanding about the character of the community and whether they were attracted for sociological reasons only, the pastor inquired about their knowledge of salvation by asking how they perceived the love of Jesus. The husband responded by citing the example of a woman in the congregation who had taught them English for five years without reimbursement. He declared that in her he had seen the love of Jesus. Who can argue with such an observation? That personal discovery was the result of meaningful Christian presence. This discovery was then followed by biblical instruction and discussion about the meaning of being a disciple of Jesus.

More than silence

Presence is more than passivity, apathy, or silence. There are times, of course, when silence is important. Some situations demand waiting and listening. Sometimes a painful silence is required as one waits with patience for the ripeness of time. In other instances, silence, restraint, or reserve is needed when people are brash, aggressive, or cheaply verbal. There are times when proclamation is inappropriate or forbidden. Some years ago I taught in a university in a country where open witness in the classroom was not possible. Similar situations exist today in the public school systems of the USA. In these situations presence is an implicit witness rather than an explicit one.

Silence can be an implicit witness so long as Christians are more than the "quiet in the land." If they are apathetic or uninvolved, silence is counterwitness. They then succumb to an isolationist, ghetto mentality because they are not present with people and for people. Christian presence must always be for others, sharing gladly in life together. A clear Christian identity must identify with others if it is to avoid fossilization. On the other hand, total assimilation to the other's culture is equally dangerous, for then Christians lose that clear identity which makes a distinguishing presence so important.

Christians are embodiments of the gospel; they stand for something. They are committed to engagement on behalf of people in whatever ways possible. Christ's presence is manifest in such engagements. There is no substitute for life involvement because people understand more easily when they see faith in a context. Such a pro-active stance stimulates curiosity and elicits questions. It is an invitation to learning by discovery.

One could cite many examples of Christian presence through Voluntary Service, Mennonite Disaster Service, or Mennonite Central Committee projects when people inquired about the kingdom after having seen signs of the kingdom. More personally, one of the rewards of teaching Elderhostel for several summers to some people of nonfaith or other faiths was to hear them ask faith questions after a trust relationship developed.

A theology of relationships

Presence helps us understand the importance of living winsomely as a Christian. It demands a theology of relationships, solidarity with others, an intense participation in the lives of people. David Bosch describes such relationships with several helpful analogies. He suggests that we are not like a water pipe that has no relationship with what it conveys or like surgical instruments that are disinfected. We are more than diplomatic mail bags; we are diplomats (Bosch, 1979:41-43). From the depths of such a relational theology can emerge an invitational theology which calls people either explicitly or implicitly to "come and see." People can then feel comfortable in their search for answers to real questions rather than receive prepackaged answers to questions for which they are not yet ready.

Christian presence cultivates the gift of hospitality, the outstretched open hand. We too easily forget that Gandhi was rejected at a church door in South Africa. The South African church had a coherent theology, a well-verbalized faith, but its door was closed. Christian presence through hospitality is concerned for personal communication rather than mere information. What we communicate is behavioral, not just rational. The one who communicates is not just a vehicle for the message but a major component as well; the medium is the message.

Unfortunately, some people have never had a relationship with anyone for whom the gospel made a significant difference. Life messages elicit word messages as the taste of good food causes one to ask for the recipe. Christian presence is sensitive to paramessages. Friendship, reverence, compassion, listening, and naturalness in relationships commend the gospel. Suspicion and defensiveness can then more easily give way to openness.

From theology to practice

Presence and goal orientation

Presence demands that we have new understandings of time, goals, and success. Our agenda will need reshaping. By neglecting presence we have often started with the wrong agenda. Presence does not always have a clear agenda; it does not start with "management by objectives." Without such projections we do not know when we have achieved our objectives. Presence requires patience, not instant success. The validity of what we do cannot be immediately measured by the results we get. Presence is a needed caution to our service mentality (a Christian motivation) or American pragmatism which leads so easily to activism, dynamism, or triumphalism.

Presence must never be a new technique. Unfortunately, some are interested in a theology of presence only as a new strategy. Presence is a response to the gospel, a spirituality, not a strategy. When presence is accepted as a strategy it is seen as a second-best way to be Christian. Robert Schreiter notes that if presence is resorted to as a kind of fall-back position when direct evangelism is not possible either because it is forbidden or not understood, presence is not really being present but a kind of strategy (Schreiter, 1985:5).

Presence and unreceptive environments

A presence theology does not avoid areas of tension or unreceptive environments. Certainly presence is preferable to absence in such situations. Presence has a new perception of "closed doors" and enables the church to be flexible in adjusting to new contexts. Such adjustment is not compromise but often releases the church to witness more effectively as it is freed from the impediments of traditional institutions. To be Christian without the power of institutions can be a purifying experience because powerlessness is frequently an advantage

for mission. When Israel was stripped of its earthly power its missionary character became more explicit. Jesus' mission was most clearly understood in his suffering and crucified presence.

For too long Western missions have operated with a success theology. Unreceptive environments may teach us that Christian presence is often what Koyama calls a "stumbling presence" and a "discomforted presence" (Koyama, 1974:228-35). Do not the Scriptures instruct us that witness is most clearly understood against the background of apparent reversal? Should our theology of triumph not be tempered by a theology of vulnerability?

If certain missionary methodology is either illegal, unworkable, or unwise, that need not spell disaster, for the church does not insist on one particular form of witness as the ultimate test of mission. No missionary method should be sacralized. The church can search for other creative ways of being present so long as it is done with absolute integrity. Attempts to disguise one's identity, work covertly, or compromise faith in too hasty assimilation undermine Christian presence.

If opportunities are not available for Western Christians, we encourage other forms of Christian presence rather than insisting on our own presence. In the call to worldwide mission it is easy to overrate our presence. It can be a kind of disguised paternalism as we "bless" others with our presence or use institutional power to make our presence felt. Sometimes Western Christian presence is the opposite of blessing because of historical memory or the adverse effects of contemporary Western culture. When it is possible for Western Christians to be present with the body of Christ elsewhere, we need to work for the enriched presence which comes from mutual stimulation and transformation.

Tragically, some churches have a tendency to advertise their presence in an obnoxious way, announcing their arrival with a particular label attached. They want to exist as separate denominational entities rather than as part of the total Christian presence. Frequently, this is neither possible nor advisable. No churches should insist on being present only if they can "fly their own flag."

The Christocentric community

It is important for the church deliberately to give more attention to the character of its presence, recognizing that its presence has often been hollow and ineffective. Too many churches are on the scene but present in the wrong way. Some mouth formulas or verbalisms but lack credibility. Some appear to be self-righteous and arrogant. Others are perceived to be phony. The quality of presence must be addressed. What does the church represent? What does it communicate? Whose side is the church on? Sometimes presence speaks loudly of a reality different from what is proclaimed; presence can deny rather than reflect Christ. How does Christ wish to be present in the midst? Churches can no longer rely on institutional power to make their presence felt. There is more to Jesus than the institutional church. There is more to Jesus than the ethnocentric church. Individuals and groups who claim to be the people of God can be disappointing. Presence must embody the life of the Lord who never disappoints. The community must be Christocentric. Identification with a Christian community may never substitute for an identification with the Lord who wishes to be head of that community. All communities distort the presence of Christ as well as reflect it. There is more to him than any community embodies. Only his presence creates new life and transforms the community.

Spirituality, not strategy

Since presence is a spirituality rather than a strategy, em-

phasis is always upon Spirit enablement for authentic presence. Christ's presence "breaks in"; it is not produced or manipulated. Though the community of believers is potentially the fullest expression of Christ's presence, the place of the individual should not be minimized. Spirituality and spiritual formation of individuals become key issues. There needs to be a strong sense of call and a clear commitment to Jesus Christ.

Occasionally it has been suggested that for a ministry of presence in a restricted area where verbalization is not expected, persons who are not so knowledgeable of the faith or strong in their commitment might be acceptable. This indicates failure to understand a presence theology, for if one witnesses primarily by life there must be no equivocation in regard to faith as this will eventually appear in how one lives. Presence requires more of one, not less. When one's life is open to people, one must live profoundly in the presence of Christ.

The gifts of people

Careful attention should be given to the kind of people recruited for ministries of presence and especially for restricted areas. Individuals must bear on their bodies the *stigmata* (marks) of Christ (Gal. 6:17). The outward journey must be refreshed by the inward journey and both sustained through a ministry of prayer. In addition to having a strong commitment, people must be open to others and vulnerable in their relationships, for an incarnational theology is always both Christ-centered and person-centered. Such people need to be able to

function in unstructured situations. This demands that they own their gifts and let the gifts identify the locus of ministry, as gifts are always prior to program. Since the Spirit gives gifts appropriate to the situation, the shape of presence varies from culture to culture. Presence is always localized; it is never pre-packaged. Discernment is required, but this can happen only as one is present in the situation and discovers how Christ takes on flesh in that setting. People are the key; whenever possible one should work for the presence of a team which is the fullest expression of the community of gifts.

Christ is present in the world even where Christians are not present, but Christian mission is a call to personify that presence. For this task humility, sensitivity, and openness are essential. As the Spirit enables presence to come alive we are surprised and overjoyed at ways in which Christ manifests himself through us.

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Mission in a Neo-colonial Context

EARL ZIMMERMAN

The neo-colonial context of Western economic domination in which mission and service agencies serve in the third world creates unique problems. Since World War II most agencies have sought to move beyond the paternalistic structures that were prevalent during the colonial era. They initiated more inclusive relational models. These models sought to protect the autonomy of the national church while making available the resources of the more affluent Western churches. There were initiatives in reciprocity—a sharing of resources and learning from each other. These have been known as partnership, fraternal relationship, or mutuality models.

My own experience with the partnership model of mission has been in the Philippines. In 1971 Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities (EMBCM) formed a relationship with Missions Now, a young Philippine church group. This relationship was unique in that the Philippine church group was not the result of Mennonite mission activity. Consequently, there was a need for EMBMC and Missions Now to adopt each other.

Mission Board people were to serve in a support and teaching role. They were cautioned against taking active leadership roles in the national churches. We sought to avoid the paternalism that had characterized much of earlier mission activity. The relationship was initiated with enthusiasm and seen as perhaps a new era of mission activity.

More recently EMBMC has been reevaluating its organizational relationship with the Philippine churches. My own involvement near the end of this period (1981-83) has provided a unique vantage point from which to reflect on that relationship. Some of the situations I describe and some of the issues I raise do not, however, pertain to that immediate context. They are, rather, a part of the larger context of mission in the third world in which we found ourselves.

Contextual problems in third-world mission

This initiative in partnership was between unequal partners. The Philippine churches came out of a background of rural third-world poverty. Their church organization was young and untested. They also carried the baggage of a long paternalistic history from the colonial era. They were familiar with leadership patterns which were generally authoritarian. On the other hand, EMBMC was an affluent Western organization. The Mennonite Church, of which it was a part, had a centuries-old independent history with a congregational form of leadership. It was increasingly confident in its North American environment and was pushing into new frontiers.

Also, this relationship was formed in a larger neo-colonial context. The Philippine economy has been and continues to be a satellite economy dominated by the economies of the industrialized nations. This economic/political reality shapes all other relationships. The more powerful nations control poor nations through international economic structures. Western multinational corporations operate in the third world through local subsidiary companies. In this context foreign entities generally are

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not directly involved in the third world. Rather, they pursue their interests through national elites who act as intermediaries.

In this regard it is particularly disconcerting to recognize that the relationships which developed between mission agencies and national third-world churches often are not unlike other neo-colonial relationships. Among the similarities is the role of a national elite which strives to relate to their expatriate colleagues on a relatively equal basis. At the same time they often depreciate and relate paternalistically toward their own people. Missionaries often play a functionary role in the life of the national church. Most often they will have secondary administrative or technical roles rather than primary pastoral or people roles. This distance makes it difficult to take the local language and culture seriously. This context is conducive to the power struggles and charges of corruption which often plague national third-world churches.

Educational structures are uncritically copied from Western models. Christian educational programs prepare people for professional careers in the church. The national church, however, is able to support few, if any, professional workers. There is a striking parallel in the larger society where many young people earn college degrees with little possibility of employment in their field of study. Such education is the organizational equivalent of an inappropriate technology. That is not to say that many good things do not come out of our educational programs: It is simply to ask if the educational structures could not be shaped in ways which would respond more appropriately to their environment.

Economic initiatives are often discouraging. Traditional patterns in which decisions are essentially made at the top and passed down have historically reinforced the understanding that little could be initiated from the local context. Economic improvement is generally viewed as dependent on outside benefactors (Owens and Shaw, 1974:4). Church initiatives are especially understood strictly as charity. When this environment is combined with the social and cultural distance between poor rural Filipinos and their expatriate partners it is hardly surprising that self-help economic projects are often less than successful. Local elites often manipulate such projects for personal gain and to enhance their traditional role as benefactors.

One must also remember that the larger neo-colonial structure militates against economic development in the poor rural sectors of the economy. The infrastructure (good roads, banking and credit institutions, power sources) is concentrated in these centers to the detriment of the rural economy. Originally many of these economic centers had been built by the colonial powers in order to extract wealth from the region.

A holistic approach to third-world mission

When EMBMC started working in the Philippines in 1971 we were optimistic. We were also naive about the complexity of the task, as one always is when starting a new endeavor. Today it is easy to become negative. Pessimism comes from expectations that have not been fulfilled. It also comes from our penchant to dwell on particulars rather than the larger picture. Understanding the larger context of mission is imperative.

The neo-colonial context dictates that we discern carefully where and how we can best serve. It is easy to find oneself in partnership with a local elite that has a stake in perpetuating an unequal and exploitative status quo. Even if a relationship has not begun with this situation, it can easily develop over a period of time. Such a relationship counters the church's ministry of empowering the powerless. It counters the New Testament servant model of leadership and ministry. We should be in the business of subverting rather than perpetuating such power structures. This is not to say that one can never serve in such a situa-

tion. We must, however, continually guard against it and seek ways to counter its negative aspects. Probably one of the more significant sociological factors of church growth is that it creates new relational patterns that build communication and organizational skills, self-esteem, self-reliance, and alternate social structures. This in itself can be a powerful tool for social justice. It is no accident that many significant movements for social justice have had their origins in such basic church communities.

Gayle Gerber Koontz, acting dean and assistant professor of theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana, states that theology should be defined "primarily as a dynamic process and only secondarily as a particular substantive system of belief" (1982:186). If we accept that understanding it will affect how we view mission. Is the faith we seek to convey primarily a set of propositional truths or the praxis of an alternate way of life? If it is the latter, we should pay close attention to the structures in which we labor. How conducive are they to that which is redemptive? How many of our resources should we spend on relationships and contexts which are significantly less than ideal?

A holistic approach to mission will seek to minister to the whole person in community. We must address people's physical, psychological, and spiritual needs in the context of their given social/cultural environment. English churchman John Stott stated: "Our neighbor is neither a bodiless soul that we should love only his soul, nor a soulless body that we should care for its welfare alone, nor even a body-soul isolated from society. God created man, who is my neighbor, a body-soul-in-community" (1975:29).

A major obstacle to such an approach to mission is our dualistic worldview which separates the spiritual and the secular. Fred Kniss, a former EMBMC worker in Kenya, stated: "Often the mission boards and MCC are seen as the two poles of the religious/secular dichotomy. We need to find ways in which the two poles on the spectrum can be brought together to form a circle—a better symbol of a holistic gospel" (1984:40).

We must seriously address the task of structuring our institutions more holistically. That task will be arduous because the institutional structures of our society militate against it. We must also recognize the trend toward secularization in our technologically dominated world.

Our agenda must include the spiritual. This will involve church planting and Christian nurture, but it may not be a privatized spirituality. We must apply our spirituality to every realm of life including the economic/political realm. The late E. F. Schumacher, British economist and author of *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, has taken significant steps in this direction. His approach of applying a spiritual dimension to economics is helpful in breaking down the dichotomy between sacred and secular. More work needs to be done in this area.

The role of Western church agencies

Perhaps the most crucial question regarding the involvement of Western church agencies in the third world is that of relationships. What redemptive relational roles can such agencies play in a neo-colonial context?

1. One important role is that of **advocacy**. Such agencies have often been legitimately criticized for being part of a larger exploitative structure. We must also recognize, however, that they have also been among the most effective vehicles for communicating the concerns of such exploited peoples to the larger world community. Societies can ignore the plight of exploited peoples by keeping them effectively hidden from public view. There is something uncanny about our ability in this regard. Bringing exploitative conditions before the public conscience is

a thankless but necessary task.

2. A second role such agencies can play in a local situation is that of **subverting unjust power structures**. By creating new institutions we create new alternatives that people did not previously have. This can shift the balance of power in a community in favor of the less privileged. The presence of an outside agency shifts that balance of power. Our presence also gives us the opportunity to stand in solidarity with the poor. It is more difficult to subvert larger neo-colonial structures. We must become more creative in this regard. Too often we have unwittingly strengthened such structures through our activities.

3. A third role that church agencies can play is **providing avenues of economic sharing** between the more affluent Western churches and poverty-stricken third-world churches. The inherent difficulties involved cannot prevent us from seeking ways to facilitate such sharing if we take the New Testament ideal of economic equality seriously (2 Cor. 8). Such sharing will ideally be in the context of local economic initiatives. It need hardly be stated that the neo-colonial context will militate against the success of such initiatives. Important components of any economic initiatives are a recognition of the infrastructure constraints. It involves a recognition of the attitude of dependency and fatalism of peoples in such contexts. This is the legacy of a history of injustice. There should also be an emphasis on labor-intensive industry, appropriate technology, and local inputs.

4. A fourth role will be in **education**. Real education should empower people. It should inform people about the nature of their environment—its constraints and its resources. One way in which unjust relationships are perpetuated is through the withholding of such information. Educational programs should include nonformal as well as formal components. Programs must be oriented toward the basic needs of a community. Education can also be a nonfunctional exotic input if it does not adequately consider its immediate environment.

5. A fifth role such agencies can play is in **health care**. In a neo-colonial context health services are largely confined to large metropolitan centers. Health services are also oriented toward expensive, curative, Western medicine. There is a real need in providing locally oriented preventive health care. The emphasis should be on good water supply, sanitary disposal of waste, health education, immunizations, control of communicable diseases, and family planning (Tan, 1980:4).

From understanding to holistic action

Understanding the neo-colonial context of third-world mission will inform how we undertake the missiological task. This larger context shapes relationships and programs that are initiated in

the local context. The success of a program involves more than a right combination of immediate personalities and resources. There are no simple answers—no quick fixes. We must be realistic about how easily and quickly enduring changes can be effected. That means taking a long view of mission. Such a view will involve long-term relationships, careful planning, multiple approaches, continued experimentation, and persistence.

The partnership model has been a step in the right direction. The problem is that the neo-colonial context of third-world mission serves as an effective constraint on healthy partnership. This suggests that one task will be to work with humanitarian people and groups in the task of eliminating such relationships in the world community. In our increasingly interdependent world it is imperative that more equitable and just relational structures are sought and effected.

In the meantime, however, we must work within neo-colonial contexts while seeking to subvert or redeem the negative features of this environment. We must carefully choose where and how to serve. It may be more appropriate to work within one social sector or geographic area than in another. The nature of our relationships will have to be continually reviewed. Our approach to mission must be holistic and should include church planting, Christian education directed toward life needs, economic sharing, economic self-help projects, and health care.

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Short-term Ministries of the Commission on Overseas Mission, General Conference Mennonite Church

VERNEY UNRUH

This report was prepared for the General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) Major Program Review held in Kansas City, September 13-16, 1985. Questionnaires had been sent to a cross-section of short-term workers (past and present) and missionaries. Thirty-five short-termers and 24 missionaries responded. Articles and books also provided material.

The short-term missionary phenomenon has been a dramatic development in overseas mission in the past ten years. From 1975 to 1979, short-term workers increased in number from 5,764 to 17,633, an increase of over 300 percent. In 1975 short-term workers represented 16 percent of all overseas workers. By 1979 this had more than doubled to 33 percent (Reapsome, 1982:112).

COM short-term experience

The Commission on Overseas Mission has been sending short-term workers for about 25 years. Overseas Mission Voluntary Service, as it was first called, was an outgrowth of the well-accepted and generally successful Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) program which developed in North America after World War II. Along with providing young people an opportunity to serve overseas, part of the reason for expanding VS to overseas was to give young men of draft age the option of fulfilling their selective-service requirement in a foreign country. Since young men in the military are sent overseas, why should conscientious objectors not also serve away from home and family?

In these 25 years, about 260 people have served for short-term periods overseas under COM. Short-termers include those who have served for at least one semester in a teaching situation at an educational institution. If shorter assignments such as those in the Colombia Bible Institute summer program or the MENNO program in Colombia would be included, the number who served overseas exceeds 300.

Motivation

The majority of short-termers have served two or three years, with a few serving less or more. They have volunteered for a number of reasons. Motives are often mixed. Those who returned the questionnaires listed the following: a chance to travel, desire for adventure, an opportunity to experience living in another culture.

But along with these somewhat personal, selfish motives, people expressed a deep desire to serve, to share their faith, to put belief into practice, and to learn about missions and the overseas church firsthand. For a few it was a time to try to discern God's will in regard to long-term service. Of the long-term workers listed in the August 1, 1985, missionary list, at least 20, or about 12 percent, served as short-term workers before they became career missionaries.

Assignments

Short-term workers have served in a wide variety of ways. There have been more teachers than any other category—teachers of missionary children, seminary and Bible school

teachers, and English teachers.

Other assignments include medical ministries—doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers, mobile clinic, secretaries; agricultural and community development projects; logistical positions which include assisting missionaries with travel, shipping, legal documents, purchasing, hosting, bookkeeping, and accounting. A few in less-developed countries such as Zaire have been involved in building construction, maintenance, and vehicle repair and upkeep.

Church-related assignments have included the pastoral ministry (particularly Lesotho), youth work, music, and English teaching in the local churches (especially in Japan and Taiwan). In a general way, short-termers have been more involved in mission-related than in church-related assignments.

Contributions

The support and encouragement short-termers have given to career missionaries has been important. In some cases, missionaries would not have been able to carry out their assignments without short-term assistance. For example, a major area of concern for parents is the education of their children. By teaching missionary children, short-term workers have made it possible for some missionaries to live in a certain location and carry out their work. In Taiwan 20 of the 70 short-termers have been teachers for missionary children.

In other areas short-term workers can do some of the time-consuming tasks that are required in an overseas setting. Keeping accounts, repairing vehicles, constructing and repairing buildings, hosting, purchasing tickets, and shipping are things a missionary can and sometimes may have to do. But if a short-term is available, the missionary is free to do those things related to evangelism and church planting or another assignment for which he or she is called and trained.

In those countries where there is a high demand for English teaching, short-term workers have helped meet some of those requests. English teaching has not been all that productive in terms of church planting. But English teachers have stimulated a curiosity toward the gospel and created a climate of goodwill toward the church. People have been introduced to the church where they likely would not have been without that avenue. In many cases missionaries can build on the foundations laid by short-termers.

In addition to the above, missionaries listed several other contributions of short-termers:

- modeled Christian faith and works,
- developed personal relationships which led to decisions for Christ,
- have been catalysts with new ideas and fresh approaches.

One missionary wrote: "They come with their youthful idealism, much like we did years ago, and often criticize without having time to understand. Yet they have added so much to our lives, kept us on our toes, questioned our values, and joined in our goals and given great encouragement."

Benefits and weaknesses of short-term experiences

Benefits

Short-term workers have many positive things to say about their experiences. To learn to know something about other

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countries and cultures and to make friends and interact and work with people was a mind-expanding experience. To share the good news and see friends make a decision for Christ or to know that one is making a small contribution to the building of God's kingdom is a faith-strengthening experience. Developing an international view of the church and getting to know firsthand some of the leaders of the church and the problems they face resulted in a greater and more sympathetic understanding and appreciation of the missionary task. The freedom to experiment, reflecting on one's own beliefs, and being in a part of the world that is experiencing vast social and economic changes were also listed as positive experiences.

The experience overseas affected most short-termers' attitudes toward missionaries and the mission task. One expressed that she gained a greater appreciation for the difficulty missionaries face in living in two cultures. Another became aware of the overwhelming task still ahead in fulfilling the great commission. Another reported that he came to see more clearly the need of the gospel among people who are highly developed technologically but underdeveloped spiritually.

Several said they appreciated learning that missionaries are ordinary human beings, not saints, subject to the same trials and temptations as anyone else. This did not decrease their respect in any way, however.

One person who completed her service 15 years ago wrote:

My overseas VS experience was the major turning point in my life . . . it was a giant step out of the familiar, alone and into the unfamiliar. It was hard, often lonely, sometimes scary. But it was always important because I literally felt myself growing in all directions—my faith was taking a new focus, my tolerance for others expanded, my appreciation of another culture developed and an absolute need for a commitment to world peace came into my philosophy. I was different when I came home—and the ways in which I was different have continued to guide my life and help me to make an impact on other lives. I will always be grateful for the chance I was given.

Short-term service is usually a profound educational and spiritual experience. Short-term workers return home with a changed view of the world, a new appreciation of both their own and other cultures, a more mature view of the church and the work of missions, and often with a deeper commitment to Christ.

Weaknesses and limitations

This is not to say there are no problems or weaknesses. Short-termers themselves recognize this. The problem listed most frequently was frustration because of a limited knowledge of the language. This is a definite barrier to developing intimate relationships and being able to share at a deep level. Missionaries also listed this most frequently as a handicap in short-term service.

Some expressed a feeling of homesickness, loneliness, and isolation. Some were in assignments where they had little opportunity for fellowship with other missionaries or with their own peer group. An older family expressed the agony of being separated from their children during college years. A feeling of always being a foreigner and never quite accepted fully by the church was painful for some; a couple of workers said they felt a bit like second-class citizens in the missionary structure.

Adjustments to climate, to chaotic traffic conditions, to trying to understand people who think differently and do things differently brought difficulties to most.

One English teacher said at times he felt burned out from

teaching so much English. Another worker listed frustration in finding needed supplies and delays with government bureaucracy as one of his biggest problems.

From the missionaries' point of view, the time required by career missionaries to orient and help short-term workers is a negative factor. Some feel this could be partially remedied if there were a more thorough orientation both at home and on location before the worker digs into the assignment.

Some short-term workers arrive fresh out of school and are enthusiastic about the theories they have learned. Without taking the time to try to understand the whys and the hows of the structures, they are ready with criticism and simplistic answers. Some have carried a Western image of the church and were critical of the local church.

A few missionaries questioned whether English teaching is worthwhile, since the carry-over to church is almost nil. One missionary felt that short-term workers are completely ineffective in winning people to Christ.

In one location the proportion of short-term workers to career missionaries seemed out of balance. Too many short-term workers can influence decision-making with short-range views. Three people raised questions about the financial cost and felt it is difficult to justify in view of the limited contribution short-term workers can make.

Recommendations

Recognizing these shortcomings, COM should continue sending short-term workers. In my view, the positive contributions outweigh the problems and difficulties.

If I were a COM member defining priorities and strategies for the next ten years in short-term ministries, I would:

1. Keep the program at about the current level but keep options open to increase or decrease in proportion to long-term workers and to respond to needs and situations that may arise unexpectedly.

2. Make plans for a more thorough orientation of short-term workers; this should include:

- required reading and written reports
- some time spent with COM staff discussing and explaining COM philosophies and policies
- an orientation course before departure for service; where possible this could be done with other Mennonite agencies
- for English teachers, a basic course in teaching English as a second language
- a thorough orientation after arrival on location involving not only the mentor but other missionaries and nationals where appropriate;

3. Set a goal that all short-term workers take a minimum of six months of language study. I would also experiment with total immersion courses, such as the Berlitz course, with a few selected people.

4. Assign short-termers to situations where they can work with other missionaries.

5. Organize an alumni reunion where workers could get together to share, evaluate their experiences, and plan ways to utilize their understanding and experience in promoting the cause of missions in the local church.

6. Finally, I would put more emphasis on spiritual preparation. Because of limited language ability, a short-termers' witness will consist more of presence than proclamation. But as Robert Ramseyer pointed out to the Commission in his paper on the rationale for COM participating in the China Educational Exchange, presence evangelism really requires more, not less, preparation, than for those who are sent out for career mis-

sionary service. A course in "friendship evangelism," with some practical experience, ought to be a basic minimum requirement for those who go as short-termers.

Short-term service is not the wave of the future. It will never replace long-term commitment to the missionary task. Continuity is a key to effective missionary work. A lifetime devoted to one goal is a powerful statement of purpose and dedication. A career in missions provides the time to learn the language and culture, to become thoroughly acquainted in the community, and to teach new believers "all that I have commanded you."

But within its limitations short-term service does have an important role to play in the overseas program. By relating closely to established missionary work it does assist those who are involved in long-term work. By improving the orientation process and giving workers a more thorough spiritual preparation, COM can strengthen short-term ministries and thereby strengthen the witness and effectiveness of its total program.

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In review

Anthropological Insights for Missionaries. By Paul G. Hiebert. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985, 315 pp., \$13.95 (pb)

Reviewed by James N. Pankratz

This is a book about relationships, communication, theology, and love. The context is cross-cultural mission; but the issues are raised so clearly, forcefully, and pastorally that any Christian thinking about the interaction of gospel and culture will be stimulated and helped.

Paul Hiebert, Professor of Anthropology and South Asian Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, has written and lectured widely on the themes of this book.

The book consists of four sections. The first, "The Gospel and Human Culture," includes a brief summary of the purposes and assumptions of the book, followed by a description of

the centrality of ideas, feelings, values, and institutions in culture.

The second section, "Cultural Differences and the Missionary," discusses culture shock and evaluating culture. It would be hard to find a more concise and accurate description of the issues. The final chapter in this section, "Cultural Assumptions of Western Missionaries," should be required reading for all North American Christians. It puts our theology, worldview, and lifestyle into world perspective.

In the third section, "Cultural Differences and the Message," Hiebert describes cross-cultural communication, symbolic communication, and worldviews. Hiebert has long been a master of this material. The story of Omodo, the polygamous nonchurch-member Christian (pp. 177-79), is one example of the need for critical contextualizing to be done with biblical faithfulness and pastoral relevance. It sets the

stage for Hiebert's discussion of cultural theologies, an issue which is sure to dominate the church in the decades to come.

Finally, in "Cultural Differences and the Bicultural Community," Hiebert examines missionaries as bicultural people. For those who have lived cross-culturally this material rings true. For those who haven't lived cross-culturally but who would like to understand those who have, I recommend these chapters.

I generally recommend to my students that they read everything Paul Hiebert writes, regardless of whether they will ever enter mission service. I suggest that all readers of *Mission Focus* follow the same advice and read this book.

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*Eternal Word and Changing Worlds: Theology, Anthropology and Mission in Tri-
logue.* By Harvie M. Conn. Grand Rapids:
Zondervan, 1984, 372 pp., \$11.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Erwin Rempel

Harvie M. Conn is Professor of Missions at Westminster Theological Seminary, and this book is written from the perspective of a seminary professor concerned that theology recover its multicultural evangelistic intentions and that of a former missionary frustrated with the challenges of cross-cultural communication.

Two catalytic events inspired the writing of this volume in the Zondervan Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives Series: the 1978 Willowbank consultation on Gospel and Culture and an invitation from the School of World Mission (Pasadena) to give the 1980 Church Growth lectures (about half the book represents material from that series).

Anthropology, theology, and missions have historically related poorly with each other. *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds* is an attempt to focus on how these interrelationships have impacted the missionary movement which has historically been more acquainted with theology than anthropology.

The first five chapters are a historical overview of applied missionary anthropology organized around Consciousness One, Two, and Three. Consciousness One resulted from the nineteenth-century warfare between cultural anthropology and theology. Consciousness Two emerged in the first half of the twentieth century and is characterized by an awareness of the diversity of cultures, a retreat from generalizations, and an emphasis on the subjective. Consciousness Three represents a convergence of the two streams. It is best recognized by the contextualization discussions of the 1970s. Chapters 4-6 focus on this new partnership, a dialogue among missions, theology, and anthropology.

A conservative evangelical in the Reformed tradition, Harvie Conn appears refreshingly eager to take risks in contextualizing theology while at the same time able firmly to resist losing his "theological scalp." I found helpful encouragement for missionaries and overseas church leaders who struggle with theology and theologizing in their own cultural contexts. Too often our theology and theologizing efforts have been characterized by a bounded set mentality (static and standardized list of essentials) than by a centered set mentality (defined center in Christ with relationship of things to that center).

Chapter summaries, an extensive bibliography, and indexes of biblical references, people, and subjects enhance the usefulness of

the book. It is highly recommended for seminary students, missionaries, and mission administrators.

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The Story of the Church, Second and Enlarged Edition. By A. M. Renwick and A. M. Harman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985, 272 pp., \$8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Roy Just

The cover says, "The first edition of the late church historian A. M. Renwick's *Story of the Church* has become a classic in the years since its publication in 1958. Now Renwick's son-in-law and former student, Professor A. M. Harman, Principal of Presbyterian Theological Hall, Melbourne, Australia, has added a new final section to the book, bringing the story up to date." Four short chapters on twentieth-century developments, including material on the emerging third-world church, have been added. The first 21 chapters remain as Renwick wrote them.

Though both theological and historical, the book pulsates with mission. This concise story covers an amazing number of interesting items to help the reader grasp the important events in the church's development. From hope to disappointment, from persecution to heroic loyalty, from individuals, councils, and great decisions, the church moves from victory to defeat and back again. The power of the gospel does its redeeming work in spite of human weakness and error.

The European setting is covered more thoroughly than Asia, Africa, or Latin America. The apostolic churches receive little or no attention. The influence of Cortez and the Spanish missionaries in the New World are largely omitted. Neither the Bible school movement of North America nor the pioneering contributions of Donald McGavran, Church Growth, or graduate missiology at Fuller Theological Seminary are even mentioned.

Not that there isn't room in the book of 267 pages. There is simply greater interest in the details of West European happenings. The new, enlarged edition could well have rounded out the picture a bit more. Calvin is noted as "the greatest man of the Reformation era" and the Westminster Confession as "the finest fruit of Reformed Theology."

The book reads easily and well. Though brief, it conveys a sense of excitement in the

sweep of church history and mission. Written from a conservative, evangelical stance, it traces the events and decisions, the beliefs and practices that enhanced or stymied the church in its development. It is similar to J. Herbert Kane's revised *Concise History of the Christian World Mission* though more complete on the European scene and can be a good introduction to this big subject.

Roy Just is Director of the Center for Mission, Fresno Pacific College, Fresno, California.

The Missionary Family. By Betty Jo Kenney. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1983, 110 pp., \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Dale Schumm

Betty Jo Kenney has written a helpful and practical book on the missionary family. She uses enough personal anecdotes to keep it interesting and to which most missionary families can readily relate.

Kenney starts with her family's call and traces their courtship, marriage, and going overseas. She has a particularly helpful perspective on missionary travel and how to make travel a family-enrichment experience both in the host country as well as in North America (chap. 5).

In Chapter 6 Kenney deals with realistic arrival expectations and advises missionaries not to be "airport experts" (p. 21). She talks about the reception possibilities and advises people to be prepared for enthusiastic or cool receptions or even outright hostility from neighbors or church people in the field. Betty Jo helpfully discusses the adjustment problems and the need to read body language as well as verbal sounds.

Kenney also has a helpful section on the respect the host culture needs to receive from the new and entering missionary. Here she emphasizes parents' attitude and role in relation to the new culture in helping the children accept and adjust to it. This respect by the missionary for the new culture helps also in the adjustment and readjustment process on reentry to the missionary's home culture.

Betty Jo works with many of the practical problems missionaries face in raising a family overseas. She deals in a helpful way with the separations—from spouse and from children—experienced by all missionaries. This is a helpful book, and I would recommend it for all missionary families.

Dale Schumm is director of personnel for Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana. He earlier served with MBM in India.

The Large Church: A Twentieth-Century Expression of the First-Century Church. By John N. Vaughan. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985, 144 pp., \$7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Peter W. Nikkel

"Large churches with satellite groups combine the best of two growth strategies." This statement by Vaughan summarizes the thesis of this book. The author is an apologist of the large church.

What size must a church be to be designated as large? This is never clearly stated, but the voluminous statistics suggest that the author is applying this term to churches with attendance of 2,000 or more.

The book contains four major chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the following 14 issues related to large churches with satellite groups: universality, authority, local autonomy, optimum size, the historical model, the carnality of completion, buildings and barriers, organizational models, definitions of "church" and "minidenomination," parachurch structures, pastoral care, strategy for urban evangelism, the potential for distorted doctrine, the strength of churches. The brevity with which these various topics are treated significantly diminishes the benefit of this chapter.

Chapter 2 is the most valuable chapter of the book. It deals with a selective history of large churches from the first century to the present. Vaughan illustrates how the majority of successful large churches have utilized small groups or satellite groups to enhance their ministry.

Chapter 3 deals with the meaning of the terms "church" and "denomination" and includes a discussion on church polity. The smorgasbord of definitions and opinions lives up to the chapter subheading "a search for definitions." Needless to say the search must continue.

Chapter 4 deals with the factors that influence church growth.

This book contains many statistics and a multitude of quotes from authors in the Church Growth field. It is flawed in that material is not sufficiently digested to present a clear thesis. This book is not a classic volume on the large church nor on satellite ministries.

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Mishkan: A Theological Forum on Jewish Evangelism, a new international evangelical publication, is available for \$10.00 U.S. from Mishkan, P.O. Box 116, Jerusalem 91000, Israel.

A Church of the Future: A Model for the Year 2001. By Walbert Buhlmann. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986, 207 pp., \$10.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Peter Penner

The main message of this book is that the Catholic Church, its Roman image deliberately diminished since Vatican II, has truly become a church of six continents. The author predicts that the church of Latin America, Africa, and Asia will (and should) dominate in the Third Christian Millennium. He thinks that the Vatican establishment must adjust accordingly by a policy of decentralization and adapt to the genius of the third-world church. That genius resides in the liberation theology of Latin America, the acculturation of the gospel in Africa, and the strength in Christian meekness and numbers of Asia.

Buhlmann hopes that contemporary historians will henceforth do greater justice to the genius of the third-world church. Apologies for the Western church's imperialism or emotional tirades against it are no longer helpful. The third world can show the way to peace, hope, and service. If there are heroes from the past, they are not the Francis Xaviers but the followers of Francis of Assisi, perhaps of Gandhi, and of John XXIII. Those of Franciscan spirit will be "the pioneers of Postconciliar [since the 1960s] Fellowship" (p. 106).

In the face of overwhelming odds against the "preevangelization" for the Third Christian Millennium, the Catholic Church—here labeled as "the greatest 'world empire'" (p. 134)—will have to decentralize at least into macro-regional structures and hope to find "unity in diversity." Unless Pope John Paul II can lead the Curia in that direction, the Roman Catholic Church may lose out to Protestantism and be left with the "elderly."

The author seems to be on a collision course with his church. He is a German-speaking liberationist, Latin-American style, and futurist (almost utopian). He hopes that the rear guard of his church by the year 2001 will have arrived where the vanguard is today. There are enough directives in papal pastoral letters since Vatican II to implement what he hopes for, if only theory can be put into practice.

One of the great values of this work for evangelicals is Buhlmann's refreshing review of papal purposes which, if implemented, would bring about a Catholic resurgence around the world. Many evangelicals will no doubt have their worst fears confirmed: the Vatican does want to be in the vanguard of the coming world church! But there is probably little to fear. The papacy has a "priesthood crisis" on its hands. Recruitment problems under the old "Tridentine [16th century] model" have reached critical proportions. Nevertheless,

evangelicals can learn much from this book and have hope for a growing believers church.

Peter Penner, Sackville, New Brunswick, is a professor in the Department of History at Mount Allison University.

Toward a New Age in Christian Theology. By Richard Henry Drummond. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985, 272 pp., \$12.95 (pb)

Reviewed by C. Norman Kraus

This book, as some of the testimonials on the cover note, is broad in scope and impressive in detailed research, but it has more the quality of a scholarly scrapbook than a carefully argued thesis. The reader may wish to read the last chapter first to get some perspective on the author's own orientation. The book will probably best be used as a source or suggestion book rather than a carefully defined position on the relation of Christ, Christianity, and other religions.

Drummond, a one-time missionary to Japan and an authority on Buddhism and Japanese church history, is presently Professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Dubuque Seminary in Iowa.

He begins with a survey of the biblical data that indicate God's universal concern for and activity in behalf of the salvation of the nations—the pre-Mosaic covenants, the inclusive vision of prophets such as Amos and Jonah, the universal covenant in the cross of Christ, and Paul's inclusive statements in Romans 1 to 3. He then reviews the more inclusive positions of the pre-Augustinian church fathers and traces the developments to the present day. Next he focuses one chapter each on Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians of the present generation who have taken an inclusive stance. And in the last chapter he gives his own brief evaluation and summary.

The stated thesis is that Western Christian theology is steadily moving toward a new era of greater appreciation for and dialogical interchange with Asian religions, especially Buddhism and Hinduism, and that one can be firmly committed to the uniqueness of Christ without rejecting the validity of saving revelation in other traditions.

What I miss most in the book is a decisive theological criterion for evaluation. For example, it is interesting to note that the Jews in the time of the Maccabees prayed for the dead and that Josephus seems to indicate belief in reincarnation (pp. 33-34). But what is its significance for interreligious dialogue today? Presumably the rationale for including this ma-

terial is to illustrate that the cultural tradition which forms the hermeneutical context of Scripture is more eclectic and inclusive than Protestant interpretation has indicated. But what is the theological significance of this fact? How does it bear upon modern hermeneutics? Apparently the author has absorbed a good deal of the more relaxed Asian "both and" approach to comparative viewpoints, and this reviewer still feels a bit more comfortable with clarification by contrast (an obvious Western bias!).

Having said this, I must add that Professor Drummond makes a creditable and persuasive case for the continuing legitimacy of a Christian mission sans the older imperialistic assumptions and absolute claims. God wills the salvation of all humankind; however, although we may hope for the universal salvation of all, we should not assume a "guaranteed" salvation (p. 196). Jesus Christ is the incarnate *Lógos*, "the absolute criterion whom we know only in part" (p. 193); he is a "being of truly cosmic dimensions" (p. 192). Through his resurrection his Spirit has been loosed into the world to work in and through whomsoever it wills. Jesus Christ, and not the church, is the fulfillment of all religions. The church is merely Christ's servant proclaiming an eschatological salvation and not the embodiment of an absolute religion.

Drummond's treatment may leave the impression that the wave of the future in Christian theology is definitely with the Pannikars, Rahners, and Küngs of Roman Catholicism and the Hicks, Cobbs, and Samarthas of Protestantism. However, the present situation would seem to indicate considerably more confusion and conflict in both groups than his consciously chosen group of representatives might suggest. If he is only saying that these men point toward the possibility of a less imperialistic, triumphalist, exclusivistic, and a more personal, appreciative, and inclusive theological discussion in the future, most of us will, at least silently, give thanks to "God of our salvation."

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Pluralism: Challenge to World Religions. By Harold Coward. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985, 130 pp., \$8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Ron Neufeldt

As the title indicates, Coward's book deals with the responses of the major religious traditions

of the world to the fact and problem of religious pluralism. The traditions involved are Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

Informing the discussion is the knowledge that the world is rapidly becoming a global community, that we cannot afford to think in isolationist terms. In the case of each of the traditions the author attempts to look at early, classical, medieval, and modern responses to religious pluralism. Helpful in each of the chapters is a conclusion summarizing and criticizing the various responses that have been offered by the traditions.

Particularly useful is the identification of unresolved problems in the responses that have been offered by the traditions thus far. In the case of theistically oriented religions, this has usually meant the inability or refusal to cope properly with the "atheistic" stance of Buddhism or the Advaita Vedanta rejection of the personal God as ultimate reality.

A recurring problem highlighted by Coward is the inability or refusal of the traditions to understand the others on their own terms. Although not the purpose of the volume, this serves to highlight a rather prevalent myth in the Western world that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are intolerant while Hinduism has historically been tolerant. All of these traditions have had and still have their exclusivistic stances. The exception to this may be Buddhism which is characterized by "the attitude of critical tolerance and the willingness to accommodate" (p. 92). The volume ends with a useful chapter on the future with respect to the issue of pluralism.

Of necessity, given the restrictions of space, the treatment of the issue is general in nature, more in the form of an overview than a definitive treatment. This is, perhaps, a virtue rather than a drawback, for the treatment of the subject is accessible to the layperson as well as the scholar. I would recommend this volume to lay church workers and missionaries as well as scholars in the field of religious studies.

Ron Neufeldt is a professor in the Department of Religion, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta.

Getting Things Done: Concepts and Skills for Leaders. By Lyle Schaller. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986, 144 pp., \$10.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Rod Zook

Once one is able to work past the almost frustratingly competent sketch of the pastor who does absolutely everything correctly in his first year of ministry, *Getting Things Done* contains

many valuable insights and helpful explanations of dynamics and relationships in the church.

The underlying questions which the book addresses include: what makes things work, who makes things work, and how are leaders made? Schaller assumes that leadership can be learned and begins to answer those questions in the composite sketch of the new pastor who not only agrees with all of Schaller's twelve basic assumptions but is also able to implement them.

The first seven chapters offer detailed and helpful discussions of seven of those basic assumptions: (1) leadership can be learned; (2) it is difficult to teach someone who doesn't want to learn; (3) effective leaders are willing to lead and know how to organize for action; (4) leaders accept the responsibility of leading; (5) a new understanding of the difference between role and style is needed; (6) leaders must take the initiative in initiating change; and (7) effective leaders affirm the value of coalitions and committees. Emerging out of the discussion of these assumptions are the concepts and skills which are promised in the subtitle.

These concepts uncover the important distinctions of such diverse understandings as the important difference between movements and organizations. A movement specializes in proclaiming the cause and vision of an ideological position, while an organization, like a church or denomination, exists to serve a constituency.

Schaller also discusses the differences between motivation, manipulation, and organization. He clearly sees leadership occurring only in the context of social interaction with people. As a result, much consideration must be given to such things as traditions, history, personal preferences, and alliances.

The book treats leadership largely within the traditional denominational categories and political history of North America. While this does not eliminate its effectiveness for others, the models, case studies, and urban trends discussed do reflect a strong flavoring from one continent.

At the same time the book provides valuable insight into the development and advantages of intentional, innovative leaders who would be adaptable to a variety of settings. This is perhaps especially important for those from traditions which have emphasized lay leadership and collegiality as virtues to the point that singular, visionary leadership is either suspect or a dying skill.

Rod Zook is a student at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Editorial

Twenty years ago missiologists were debating a theology of presence. Proponents saw it as a corrective to certain tendencies in Western culture: excessive activism, impatience, poor listening ability, cultural insensitivity. Opponents perceived a theology of presence as a sellout to passivity, disbelief in the great commission, a rationalization for not "naming the name."

It is noteworthy that neither side made its case biblically or theologically. Both groups addressed the issue in terms of strategy. The episode illustrates how an important biblical concept, inherent to missionary witness, can get buried in debate.

As Richard C. Detweiler and Calvin E. Shenk demonstrate, presence is integral to salvation history. Those who on strategic grounds pit presence against proclamation are playing a game which can only reduce our understanding of biblical mission.

Indeed, the longer one studies the biblical record, the richer and more multiform mission appears. It is when we begin to develop our strategies that we are tempted to take selectively from the Bible that which best suits our purposes. In the process we have—undoubtedly unwittingly—reduced its scope and diluted its richness.

The Bible begins with the Creator lovingly at work creating beings worthy of fellowship and relationship who live in the garden of perfection. That scene is soon shattered when the man and woman choose to violate that relationship with God. As a consequence they suffer banishment from the garden. The story of salvation, then, is the tracing of attempts, mostly from the side of God, to repair this fatal breach. In the end it becomes possible only when God moves alongside man and woman by taking up residence in the human situation. The Holy One's presence finally becomes so intolerable that he is crucified on a cross, the Lamb slain for the sins of the world.

But the way that good news is shared and witnessed to before the world is infinitely varied. In his classic study of *The Growth*

of the Church in Buganda (1958), John V. Taylor describes the content of the message brought by the missionaries who preached to the Buganda after their arrival in 1877. He also discerns what those first listeners heard. Taylor notes that these missionaries preached the only way they knew how—from within the culture of nineteenth-century and their particular church tradition. Preachers cannot preach from outside their own cultures. By the same token, listeners can receive a message only as mediated through their culture.

But that message must have about it a quality of urgency—not mere relevance. As Taylor puts it,

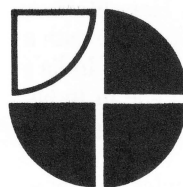
The revelation of a transcendent, personal and righteous God was not relevant, but revolutionary, to the Buganda, yet that was the Word which they heard. The fact that they did hear it, and did not at that stage, for the most part, hear the message of the Saviourhood of Christ or the power of the Spirit, though these were the themes that were being preached, suggests that this was the Word of God to them and it was independent of the word of the preacher (p. 253).

Thus the essence of the message was of the transcendent God become present in vital relationship with the Buganda. This became the basis for a new order of life among that people. Within a decade a group of these young Christians would be martyred for their newfound faith in the God who revolutionized their lives.

We need to continue to search for ways and means of more effectively and faithfully witnessing to the gospel. But we must be wary of strategies which do not serve the gospel. We must reject formulations which reduce and distort the gospel. Our methods, formulas, and strategies always stand under the judgment of the gospel. That, too, can be good news.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

MISSION FOCUS



Witnessing Discipleship in Asia

P. B. ARNOLD

Divine providence extends to all nations, to all cultures and religions. Hence the command to make disciples of all nations. Witnessing is essential for making disciples. Christians witness when they share their knowledge of God's grace, based on their own experience of faith in Christ: "For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). The peace, joy, and serenity which people see radiating from Christ's disciples around them act as stronger forces to attract people to Christ than do the most learned arguments. A good witness approaches an individual with genuine love rather than with the spirit of judgment. Witnessing is sharing of information and not an argument. One indispensable character of the witness is the ability and desire to listen patiently to others' points of view. The apostle Paul wrote, "The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power" (1 Cor. 4:20). The decisive question will be whether this power makes itself felt.

Disciples often take on mannerisms and characteristic ways of speech and conduct to the extent they become imitators of their gurus. True followers of Jesus must be likewise. Each believer has the responsibility to grow in grace through study and understanding of God's Word and daily application of its truths to life and association. In this way the life of Christ may become dynamic, making each a living witness to others. Thus, the call to discipleship is not primarily for the benefit of the disciple.

The following Scripture portions clearly show that we, as Christ's disciples, are commanded to make disciples of others. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20). Christ also commanded that the gospel be preached to every creature (Mark 16:15-16). Apostle Paul tells about the compulsion of Christ's love in the ministry of reconciliation (1 Cor. 5:14). Proverbs 11:30 says, "He who wins souls is wise." Hence the mission of every Christian is to present the gospel in the manner that is appropriate to make disciples of Christ.

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Religions and Customs

The identity of the Christian community within the human community constitutes the church. The church constitutes a factor of dynamic change within the life of society. Evangelization involves a dialogue that is healthy and mutually enriching. One has to identify oneself with the people, their surroundings, their religion, their ambitions, and their goals. That is the reason the apostle Paul said, "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22).

The obvious way of preaching Christ in Asia would be to approach the cultures and religions of Asia with genuine love and sympathy, to appreciate all that is good and genuine in them, and to help people see that their own noblest aspirations find their fulfillment in Christ. Hitherto, the Christianity that was presented in Western garb has tended to reject not only the religious systems but also the values and meanings of the cultural and historical experience of the people all over Asia. The spread of the kingdom of Christ has become more and more difficult as the Western Christian religion that was introduced has created an anti-Hindu, anti-Buddhist, anti-Confucius, and even anti-national attitude in Asia.

Religious life in Asia has its roots in a deep inner experience endowed with great spontaneity. Worship of God is not a mere duty but an instinct, a longing, a fulfillment of aspirations, and a joy and satisfaction of fulfilling God's will according to one's own understanding. Asians carry within them the echo of thousands of years of searching for God, a quest which is incomplete but often made with great sincerity and righteousness of heart.

Becoming one with Christ involves denying all that is not like Christ and rising to a new life in Christ. Converts retain their identities, find their most genuine desires fulfilled, but renounce all that is not Christlike in old religion. It has been said that instead of implanting the seed of Christ in the rich soil of Asia and allowing it to take root and to grow, missionaries tried to transplant the fully grown tree as it had developed in the West. Hence the poor results of the Western missionary effort.

The mainstream of Hindu religious thought, unlike Christianity, does not stress people's identity with God but demands their complete surrender to God. *Swarga* in Hindu conception

is only a temporary abode of soul. The aim toward which Hindus strive is *Moksha*, which is that absorption into God by which they are free from the necessity of rebirth. Hans Staffner says, "If Christianity would have been preached in India with a genuine love and appreciation of all that is good in India's cultural and religious traditions, it would be at home in India. But as the Christian religion came dressed in a western garb, it remained a stranger" (1985).

Buddha did not teach about God to his disciples. Nirvana, the blessed final, unchanging, and deathless state, remains vague. Because every human heart, in the words of St. Augustine, is restless till it finds rest in God, Buddha's disciples found that they could admit the existence of God without becoming disloyal to what was of value in their own tradition. Buddhism resolutely frees people's minds from slavish attachment to worldly pleasures and values that do not last; it fosters recollection and strives toward acquiring a great skill in meditation and contemplation. It frees people from self-centeredness and induces them to concentrate all their efforts on attaining the one thing, namely, the Nirvana. Hence Buddhism in several respects lays a good foundation upon which to build the Christian religion. John C. H. Wu speaks of the religions of China as a guide to Christ: "I must speak in some detail of the religions of China. They constitute my moral and religious background and hence they form an integral part of my spiritual life. They are an important preparation for my marriage with Christ. I do assert that the three religions of China served as my tutors bringing me to Christ, so that I might find justification in faith" (1951) (Gal. 3:24).

Indian Islam is not a monolithic entity; Turkish, Arabic, and Afghan types of Islam are different, but all of them are found in India. Persian culture from abroad and Hindu ideas from within have modified and variegated the Islamic complex. Hence Indian Islam is a necklace of racial, cultural, and political pearls strung on the thread of religion. Consequently, Indian Islam does not appear to be as invulnerable as in other countries.

Making disciples—the approach and the method

It has been said about Orientals that the only concept of God they can understand is the one they see in the life of a Christian. God is not far from any of us. For it is in God that we live, move, and have our being (Acts 17:27). When we bring the gospel message, we need not destroy what is good and beautiful in the other, but starting from what they already have, we should help them to find what they lack. In the Christian context, we witness when we share knowledge of God's grace based on our own experience of faith in Christ. This is positive testimony to the truth we have experienced and the assurance and satisfaction it has brought. Witnessing our faith must be from our own experience, in the normal conversational style and daily vocabulary.

Illustrations should be as much as possible from the contemporary life around us. Jesus was moved with compassion for people and taught them. Hence we should approach the individual with genuine love but not with a judging spirit. Individuals should be approached as people to be befriended but not as trophies to be won. A non-Christian should be seen as a person but not merely as an object of evangelism.

When we think of witnessing discipleship, we need to consider not only the age-old religions, traditions, and social habits of Asian countries but also the rapid development strides in the recent times in all fields—education, industry, science, technology, travel, agriculture, urbanization, population explosion, and breaking up of family ties. Not to be lost sight of are materialization and the permissiveness which slowly are creep-

ing from the West into Asian countries. Poverty, injustice, corruption, and political shifts offer new challenges to the propagation of the gospel.

On the Indian scene, modern development has brought some desirable social changes, particularly by loosening caste and tribal bonds; but it has also led to serious problems of intolerable poverty, denial of equitable distribution of assets, unemployment and underemployment, slow economic growth, corruption and hoarding of illegal wealth, atrocities on women and weaker sections, the evils of dowry and child labor. Therefore, it is imperative that Christianity take into consideration all these factors and think of solutions in the Christian perspective. Mere preaching through any media for any length of time may not achieve the desired results.

The image of Christian church is of an exclusive and closed community redeemed and unequivocally identifying itself with the kingdom of God. It sees itself antithetical to the world of sin. Therefore, the traditional response of the Christian church to national issues has been to bring people of diverse faiths into the church through conversion, thus overlooking the distinction between the church and the nature of the Christian faith.

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Therefore, the new frontier of the church is between righteousness and unrighteousness, justice and injustice, truth and falsehood. The church's concern should be not to preserve itself but to give itself away to be broken and shared, Jesus-like, so that people may live and come to taste the fullness of being offered to them by God in Christ, who was raised to a radically new existence.

In the Indian religious pluralistic society, dominated by the Hindu ethos, the Indian church must discover its own identity through its own sociocultural and spiritual experience and express its faith in its own way. The human rights which must be proclaimed by the church and defended by it are the basic rights to food, shelter, health, education, and employment, as well as the political rights and civil liberty of people to shape their political, social, economic, and religious destiny. The Christian community must start the whole process of introspection and rethinking.

Harking back to great names and past glory is not going to be good enough. We are living in the here-and-now. Our role must change from commentator to that of a participant. The Christian has been enjoined to "love thy neighbor as thyself." This command calls for complete identification with those around us and a desire to work together. There is no place in Christianity for cowardice, arrogance, or separatism based on fancied insecurity or feeling of inferiority.

Back to the Indian scene

Both Christianity and Islam in India grew largely through conversion from the low castes. These two alien religions also occupy a negative position in the cognate structure of the majority of the Indian population. This is because of the past association of Christianity and Islam with conquest and colonialism and their propensity for proselytization. Christians in India do not assume overall religious identity; they are highly divided, not only denominationally but ethnically, regionally, and linguistically. India's position is favorable for Christianity, given the metaphysical tolerance and doctrinal catholicity of Hinduism.

Theoretically, the state also has accorded equal status to all religions. Much of the spoken and written criticism of the church in India demonstrates that the attack always had to do with one or more of the institutional aspects of the church. Seldom do we find serious criticism of content of faith, worship, or the religious practice of Christians. Nirad C. Chaudhuri's prediction of the future of the Christians in India is as follows: Well-to-do Christians will one day become merged with Westernized upper-middle-class Hindus, with the only distinction being one of faith which nobody, including themselves, will take seriously; the remaining Christians will become something like an inferior caste in Hindu society.

When we understand the doctrine of creation, we know that we belong together along with our non-Christian brothers and sisters. We cannot artificially separate ourselves from the rest of society in the name of redemption or salvation through Christ. This implies that the Christian community is not a communal group but is rather the firstfruit of all God's new creation, of the only new humanity in which God intends to gather all in Christ. Only such an image of the church can save the alienation and exclusion that the Indian Christians have created between themselves and the non-Christian communities and their pan-Indian heritage.

Financial dependency upon the West leads the non-Christian to have the image of the Indian Christian church as foreign. One does not need to list our patterns of worship, modes of doing theology, church architecture, and so on, that further confirmed Hindus and their image of the India church

as strange and alienated from the cultural and religious ethos of the land. We should perceive things as Indian Christians but not indigenize the gospel. If the church is to become authentically international, it will be through its understanding of Christ in terms of our own Indian historical and sociocultural context. The gap between the clergy and the laity needs to be narrowed further, for being the church is being the whole people of God. Increasingly, the active Christian young people seem to be slipping away from the church. At times they are highly critical of the church itself. This tendency needs to be studied in depth and remedied.

Everett L. Cattel, writing about Christianity in India, says, "This numerically but highly nominal christian church must be revitalized. These numerical christians must be turned into vital soul winning christians." Jordan C. Khan, a Muslim convert of India, writes that large numbers of Christians are in Christianity but not in Christ (1980). Hence the efforts to make disciples should be directed both within the Christian community and outside it. E. D. Devadason writes, "Even after a hundred years of involvement of the Church in India, it has not produced a serving community but a purely self-serving community" (1982). This situation must change. The church must look beyond the four walls of its churches, institutions, organizations, and projects. The recent exercise in the funding of rural projects by Christian agencies to reach the poor and the needy has become counterproductive as the resources are largely absorbed by the channels themselves.

The Christian church alone separates religion from politics in Western-style; Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism do not. In the matter of conversion of low-caste untouchables to Sikhism and Buddhism, the state continues to award Scheduled Caste benefits to them, but if they happen to get converted to Christianity or Islam, the benefits—monetary and material—are automatically cut off.

Till recently, conversion to Christianity was considered an attractive proposition by the poor and the downtrodden sections of the Indian community. Now the trend has slowed down almost to the point of stopping. They are now attracted by the promise of equality offered by Islam. Quite a few converts are getting themselves reconverted to Hinduism in order to enjoy the privileges and concessions available and offered by the government to them as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Strangely enough, this happens always from the Christian converts but never from among the Muslim converts. In recent times, at Meenakshipuram, a village in South India, a large number of Christian converts and Scheduled Caste Hindus embraced Islam.

It is wrong to think that disadvantaged people are available for purchase. Brother Bakht Singh strongly feels that overdependence on Western churches rather than on God for money is a blot on our faith. Even the recent trends to have more money, more power, more people, and more knowledge appear to be using more of human strength and resources rather than faithfully following God's plans.

Toward making disciples

"When I say to a wicked man, 'you will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood" (Ezek. 3:18). We are clearly warned that the Lord is going to make us accountable for the souls that are doomed to perish, especially the ones with whom we come in contact. We should strive to become innocent of the blood of all people as the apostle Paul, who confidently says, "I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men" (Acts 20:26).

In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, grace without discipleship is cheap grace (1974). And to quote again Brother Bakht Singh, the greatest evangelist of India of recent times, "We must know what our responsibility is; not only to preach but to take the people deep in the foundation truths of the faith" (1978).

Winning people to Christ is only the beginning. We are to serve them until they become true disciples of Christ. To make disciples goes further than preaching and hearing. To be a disciple is to be attached to the person of the Christ and lead a life fulfilling the will of the Father in heaven.

The church needs deeply committed Christians in all walks of life, in all professions, and in all countries, so that the Christians can be what Christ has called them to be, namely, the salt of the earth and the light of the world. To be worthy to receive the reward (Rev. 22:12), we are to keep ourselves busy till the Lord comes (Luke 19:3).

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Church Development in Costa Rica—A Reflective View

ELMER LEHMAN

Twenty-five years have passed since the late Orie O. Miller said, "I envision the day when there will be a Mennonite Church in each capital of every country of Central America." Since that statement was made, some 7,000 people have identified with the Mennonite Church in these countries, including some in every capital city. The Costa Rica Mennonite Conference represents 1,000 of these members in 20 congregations.

Ten Reflections

A new missionary may feel like he or she has it all together when arriving on location. That illusion is soon shattered, for someone keeps changing the questions. Taking the stance of a learner has helped this writer to gain innumerable insights into church development through the experiences of the past quarter of a century. The perspectives which follow arise from these years of intimate involvement with the Mennonite Church in Costa Rica.

Elmer Lehman teaches mission courses at Rosedale Bible Institute, Irwin, Ohio. He and Eileen and their family served from 1961-83 in Costa Rica and continue to serve during the summer in Central America.

1. External conditions do not determine the effectiveness of the church's ministry.

The church does not depend upon optimum political, economic, and social conditions to experience holistic growth. Were such the case, the church in North America should be the fastest-growing, most dynamic and spiritual church in the world. These conditions must concern us, for Christ was anointed to preach good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoner, and release for the oppressed. But, the provision of the proper political and economic and social conditions for our North American perspective will not necessarily make for better church growth, qualitatively or quantitatively. Our churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as a whole are setting the pace in both numerical growth and spiritual vitality.

While ministering to these needs as an expression of the love of Christ within us, we do not stop there. Only as people come to know the truth embodied in Christ can they really be set free. Thus, the church can be established and can function under the most adverse and antagonistic circumstances. Some doors may appear to be closed to us humans, but they cannot keep God from going through, for he holds the master key.

2. Flexibility is a vital ingredient in mission.

Missionaries will likely arrive with a rather strong sense of calling of what God is leading them to do. They soon discover,

however, that needs and issues keep changing. Those who feel strongly called to a specific task for the Lord will become most frustrated if they believe that any other task is outside the will of God in their lives. The needs of a developing church will constantly change, and the missionary needs to be willing to adapt. As an example, this writer has been involved in the roles of church planter, pastor, overseer, administrator, legal representative, leadership-trainer, counselor, and encourager, to mention several.

Not only does the missionary need to be flexible. The church that is growing will also exhibit this trait. Several key leaders spent many hours together over a period of sixteen months to prepare a constitution for the Mennonite Church in Costa Rica. When it was finished and approved, every need appeared to be met, both for legal recognition and for the internal working relationships for the smooth functioning of the newly organized conference. In reality, there have been frequent amendments and some major overhauls in the document so that the conference could better serve the needs of its constituent members. There will likely be more changes.

The church planter—whether an individual, a team, or an organization—needs to program carefully and invest its resources wisely to avoid being left with structures and plans that nobody wants and that are difficult to eliminate. Room needs to be provided for flexibility and adaptability.

Structure needs to be limited to the essentials. There is no virtue in having so much organization that all of the energy is consumed in keeping the machinery in operation. Flexibility permits organization to be a servant of the church and not its master.

3. Lifestyle evangelism makes a healthy church.

Evangelism has not been a method or program but a way of life. It has not been an activity set aside for Tuesday evening or Sunday afternoon. A major factor in the growth of the church has been the utilization of web relationships, of families sharing the gospel message with other families. As a result, a major portion of the congregations is composed of family units. Building on natural relationships in one's sphere of influence—while being supplemented by campaigns and other special emphases—has been an effective approach.

Planting of new congregations tends to follow people from existing congregations who are on the geographical fringes of the congregation's ministry. These often begin as cell groups or home Bible studies. The emphasis has been on planting the church and not merely transplanting the church with people who have moved from other Mennonite congregations. These should be followed up, but too often they become a closed fellowship without penetrating the new community and attracting others to the church.

Nor is it a matter of following dissatisfied people who bring their resentments and bitterness with them. These need ministry and should not be ignored. However, the church in Costa Rica has experienced its best results by working with new people who have not been disillusioned by past unsatisfactory religious experiences. Sometimes, however, these experiences may be stepping-stones in the person's search for a meaningful Christian experience. If this happens, these experiences can be most helpful if they are not accompanied by bitterness.

4. There is room for an identifiable Anabaptist witness.

A few weeks after the arrival of the first Mennonite missionaries to Costa Rica, this writer was accompanied by a fellow worker on a visit to the president of the Costa Rican Evangelical Alliance. This entity represented most of the Protestant

mission agencies working in the country. In that interview, the president of the Evangelical Alliance clearly emphasized that there was no room to work in Costa Rica for churches that would not cooperate with the existing work already established. For those churches that would cooperate, there was plenty of room to work.

From the beginning, the Mennonite Church in Costa Rica saw its position as one of cooperation in carrying out the great commission and not as one of competition. It has been possible to establish a Mennonite Church with a clear Anabaptist identity while openly cooperating with the total evangelical movement in the country. This needs to be worked at, however, so that the unique contribution of Anabaptism is kept in focus and that our perspectives are not merely dissolved in the mainstream of evangelicalism.

This does not give room for several kinds of Mennonites to be present in one geographical area in competition with each other. Various groups of Mennonites can complement each other if their attitudes and practices are Christlike, but they will only cause harm if they begin to bite and devour one another. Throughout the Central American region, various Mennonite groups have been able to affirm one another and grow together by utilizing their spiritual gifts for the benefit of all.

There is a tendency to want to believe that people choose the Mennonite Church because they are convinced that here is where the correct doctrine is found. The Costa Rican experience has shown that people respond more to love and caring than to the search for correct truth. Later, as they are assimilated into the congregation, they gradually develop an appreciation for Anabaptist principles and often come to own them with deep conviction. But these principles were not the deciding factor in bringing people to the Mennonite Church. Love, acceptance, and caring concern by the members of the local congregation form the key to attract new people to the church.

5. Opportunity should be provided for the church to emerge.

When is the local church or the national body in charge? Who really owns the church? This needs to be clear. It cannot be taken for granted. A hazy understanding of responsibilities between Rosedale Mennonite Missions and the Costa Rica Mennonite Conference lasted for a couple years, until a clear memo of understanding, mutually agreed upon by both parties, was drawn up and signed. There had been a subtle feeling that if Rosedale owned the churches, the mission should pay the bills. When the national church clearly saw that it was in charge, with a promise from the mission to be supportive and continue to assist where it could, the haze cleared. The national church has not hesitated to move ahead when ownership has been clear.

Another important area of ownership is in convictions regarding the application of scriptural principles. These cannot be imposed. What about foot washing? Should women be veiled for worship? Is there a Christian salutation? What is women's role in ministry? Is there a place for speaking in tongues in public worship? Missionaries will be asked for their understandings on these issues and others. If these understandings are followed merely because they are the convictions of the missionaries, they will likely be dropped when the missionaries leave. The local and national church needs to be permitted to develop its own convictions based upon careful study of the Word. These may or may not be the ones the missionaries brought. It may be surprising how many of these convictions the national church will own, perhaps gradually developing them if given the freedom to do so in healthy mission/national church relationships.

6. *New believers are God's gifts to the church.*

If we believe with Paul as in 1 Corinthians 12:18 that God places each member in the body as he wants them to be, we have no choice but to accept them into the body and seek to discern the gifts each has for the benefit of the body. The gifts are not given as a bonus or as a trophy but as tools for ministry. The assimilation process becomes most important. People need to feel wanted, accepted, needed, loved, and assimilated.

Fellowship circles need to be opened to new people, some of whom are gifted and qualified for leadership. Opportunity needs to be provided for them to exercise their gifts. Often the small groups or cell meetings are a good place for them to begin. Thank God for new believers, placed into the body by the Lord of the church as gifts to the church.

7. *People's needs cannot be ignored.*

People came in search of something, with a frequently unexplainable sense of need. The church that focuses on ministry to these felt needs finds a growing number attracted to it. People have little interest in discussing abstract theology. They desire preaching which is pragmatic. They want sermons that can be applied to experience. In spite of having received courses in homiletics, pastors seldom preach sermons with "three points and a poem." Rather, their sermons are inspirational, preached with fervor and conviction, but often with no distinguishable outline, though clearly based on a biblical text.

Worship is an activity to enjoy, not to endure. It has an element of excitement and exuberance. Hymnals are seldom used. People will stand for lengthy periods of time and sing one chorus after another, accompanied by hand clapping, electric guitars, and tambourines. These do not drown out the voices, for everyone—from preschoolers to senior citizens—sings. Worship is expected to meet contemporary needs, with people participation and meaningful ministry. Hardly anyone is quite aware of what the closing hour is expected to be, for the clock is a servant and not the master.

8. *Leadership is vital and indispensable.*

Leadership is frequently the most critical issue in church development. Most churches could have a greater ministry if leaders were available. Jesus did not ask us to pray for the harvest, for the harvest is ripe. We are to pray for harvesters, for laborers, for leaders who will equip the Christian community to join in getting the job done.

The most effective leadership in cross-cultural settings emerges from the local body. Even academically well-trained leadership faces many barriers when imported from another culture or geographical area. It is not possible to speak of one best way to train leaders. But training is necessary. In-service training seems to have produced more positive results than institutional training.

The program of SEMILLA (Ministerial Seminary of Anabaptist-Mennonite Leadership) has been and is serving a vital role in equipping and enabling those who are already in positions of leadership. This cooperative program of the Mennonite churches in eight countries from Mexico to Panama has been able to bring well-trained people in several fields of concentration to share in short, concentrated courses on an advanced level of study. These are conducted several times each year. They are most relevant because they do not deal with abstract theories but touch practical problems and issues in a pastor's current ministry. Investing in people already in positions of leadership is proving to be a wise use of the wider church's resources of funds, people, and time.

9. *Relationships between mission and national church can be healthy.*

Many books and articles highlight the seemingly unavoidable tension that develops and the strained relations that embarrass the mission in its relation to the national church. This need not be so. Missionaries are needed and wanted if they are the right kind. They need to be ready to be subservient, submissive, and supportive. They need not be technicians who arrive to take a secular position and relate to the church on a marginal-time basis. This needs to be considered in some countries because of legal requirements for a residence visa. In Costa Rica and in Central America, this is not generally the case. Relationships can be, and have been, good because the church has been allowed to emerge and develop and mature.

This is a process which needs preparation and requires adjustments. Issues and policies need to be clarified. Any financial assistance needs to fit a clearly spelled-out policy and must aid the church in growing into maturity. It must avoid creating a permanent dependence. People who are willing to make a long-term commitment and identify closely with the national body of believers will have an effective ministry. By being willing to work under national leadership and for the national church, the image of the imperialistic missionary is likely to be erased. The church will move ahead, using all of its available resources in the work of the kingdom without examining the individuals' passports before determining their usefulness.

The missionary has a unique opportunity to transmit the vision for mission to the national church. Too many mission agencies never reach this stage. Some stop at the first stage of being a church involved in mission. Others go on to the second stage and rejoice to see a daughter church emerge. Too many feel the job is finished when that daughter church grows and becomes autonomous, no longer needing the mission.

But it is not enough for the developing church to have only a theology of church. It also needs a theology of mission. Our task is not complete until the church that develops becomes a missionary church. Only then will it have captured the Anabaptist vision.

10. *The door to the upper room must be kept open.*

The entire movement needs to be saturated with prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit. The success of the developing church is not dependent upon the resources of our tools and techniques, although the Holy Spirit does utilize these resources. As people in the body of Christ return to the upper room, both individually and collectively, they will see the manifestation of the power of the Spirit of God.

Our availability is more important than our ability. A study entitled "How to Organize a Mission Program in the Local Church" (Louis Niebauer Company, Jenkintown, Pa., 1973) suggests ten traits that should characterize our ability in the work of mission. These are availability, teachability, stability, durability, dependability, adaptability, compatability, responsibility, mobility, and accountability.

Salt and light in Costa Rica

The Mennonite Church in Costa Rica and throughout Central America is alive and vibrant, searching to be a faithful church in a troubled world. The church struggles to understand the implications of the vision of Anabaptism in their application in an unjust and violent society and seeks to be filled with the fullness of God and move forward in the empowering, equipping, enabling, and energizing work of the Holy Spirit.

Innumerable ideas on solutions to Central America's complex problems are flowing freely. Each of these countries has a

Mennonite Church. God in his wisdom has added several thousand people to his church in this area who presently identify with the Anabaptist vision. This is not a mere coincidence. They are there for times like these. Their leaders desire to follow the Father in faithfulness. They are dedicated to daily

discipleship. They are salt and light in their communities. Rather than implement imported and imposed alternatives from the outside, it is of utmost urgency to hear what the Spirit is saying to our churches in Central America.

Is Anabaptism Relevant to 20th-Century Japanese Christianity?

C. NORMAN KRAUS

Sixteenth-century Anabaptism

From its inception Anabaptism has viewed itself as a third alternative to Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. In the sixteenth century it was not a unified movement or theology like Lutheranism or Calvinism. It represented, rather, a perspective which was at once more radical and more conservative than Protestantism. It was more radical in the sense that it dared to challenge the most basic assumptions of a culture which considered itself Christian. It was less radical in that it tended to accept the semi-Augustinian position of the Catholic Church rather than Luther's more radical redefinition of justification.

It broke radically with the sacramentalism of the medieval Roman Church which had largely reduced Christianity at the popular level to participation in the quasi-magical sacraments. And it broke radically with the concept of a sociopolitical "Christian" society which had been taken for granted since the time of Augustine. Both of these radical positions are already implicit in the name "Anabaptism" itself. Since citizenship in the "Christian" political order does not signify membership in the church, they argued, the newly born citizen should not be automatically baptized. And further, since the baptism ceremony did not have sacramental power to regenerate the new infant born in original sin, infant baptism was unnecessary in any case.

This challenge was based directly on a radical biblicism. The first Anabaptists came to a fresh understanding of the Bible through the discoveries of humanist scholars of the Renaissance. These scholars had reintroduced Greek and Hebrew into the universities, and the first Anabaptists, who were themselves university men, read the Bible in its original languages and not only in the Latin version upon which the church based its interpretations. When what they read in Scripture differed from what the church had taught, they rejected the authority of the church and relied on the words of Scripture. Indeed, they tended toward a naive biblicism, and many of them were highly suspicious of theologians, including Protestant theologians.

Their appeal to the Bible was more radical than other Reformers also in the sense that they made the New Testament the final authority in the Bible. They did not reject the Old Testament, but they made the life, teaching, and example of Jesus the norm for interpretation. For them the words of Jesus and his apostles who gave witness to him have authority beyond Moses and the prophets. Church doctrine and practice must be determined from the New Testament Scriptures.

On the other hand, as we said above, Anabaptism was more conservative in its challenge of the church's semi-Augustinian concept of grace and justification. While it clearly rejected the sacramental concept of grace, it accepted the formal theological principle that regeneration is the ground of justification. Grace is regenerating and enabling grace, not merely justifying grace.

Augustine, who stands at the threshold of medieval theology, had developed an extreme doctrine of human depravity, prevenient grace, and predestination which the Roman Church never officially accepted. On the other hand, the church accepted Augustine's definition of grace as a gift of renewal and moral enablement in the human heart which became the basis for God's justification of the renewed sinner.

Luther and Calvin revived the Augustinian concepts of depravity, predestination, and prevenient grace, and they interpreted faith as simple assent to and trust in Christ for salvation. However, Luther went beyond Augustine when he said that the effect of grace is primarily justification, and Calvin put great stress on the point that such faith is impossible apart from prevenient grace and election.

The Anabaptists did not object to the Protestant principle that salvation is by "faith alone," but they did reject the concept of unconditional election and faith as a "hidden" or "invisible" conviction based on such an election. They held that true saving faith is a human decision to accept Christ's offer of salvation and to follow him even to the death as faithful disciples. And they held that the work of grace enables this kind of discipleship.

For Anabaptists, true saving faith is obedient faith. It is not a matter of faith and works; rather, it is a **faith that works**, that is, that obeys. Thus for them faith in Jesus Christ implied a lifestyle adapted to their own culture but modeled on that of Jesus. This was not a literal imitation like the monastics had advocated but a following after his pattern and attitude, which in German is called *Nachfolge Christi*.

Christianity in Japan

When Protestantism was introduced to Japan, it came as an im-

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port of the Western tradition of Augustinianism. It first arrived in its more orthodox garb, but later the rational, liberal Protestantism, which was so influential in Europe at the time, was also introduced into the universities and thus into the churches. Thus alongside the Roman Catholic-Protestant schism the Evangelical-Liberal Protestant schism has also become endemic to Japanese Christianity. Our question today is whether the Anabaptist alternative to these systems might have any relevance to this situation. The answer to this, it seems to me, is a provisional yes.

Obviously, Japanese theology does not need another Western theological system to imitate. But Anabaptism does not have a system to offer. Rather, it is a challenge to the Western theologies of Christian civilization and imperialistic religion. As such it may offer a theological alternative in cultures which are not dominantly Christian. Let me explain briefly.

Post-Augustinian Christianity spread an imperialistic Christianity backed by military expansion and political domination over the European continent. Thus European Christianity was the religion of the conqueror even though its central message was the cross. Indeed, the cross was transformed into the emblem of the conquering Christian armies.

In this manner Europe was covered with a thin veneer of "Christian culture" which, in fact, baptized the old tribal religions into a new super-religion of the Holy Roman Empire. The theology of Augustine undergirded and justified this "Christian empire," and it was never repudiated by the Protestant Reformers or subsequent Protestantism. Both liberalism and orthodoxy are the heirs of this theology. Of course, the secularization of politics has ended the overt liaison between church and state, but Protestantism has never formally repudiated much of the theology that supported this Constantinian synthesis. Even today it speaks in terms of social establishment and "civil religion." It does not hesitate to use political pressure to enforce its dictates where possible, and it continues to support and rely upon the military for protection of its missionary ventures.

So it has been in Japan. The implicit—if not explicit—hope of both Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries has been to create a "Christian Japan" which will be an ally of "Christian America," especially against atheistic communism. I would suggest that the Anabaptist understanding of biblical faith and discipleship offers a relevant challenge to this imperialistic Christianity as we continue to search for more genuine Japanese expressions of the gospel.

Menno's challenge to contemporary Christianity

Menno Simons (1496-1561) was not the founder of the Anabaptist movement. Indeed, neither was he the founder of Dutch Anabaptism. But Menno is an excellent representative of the biblically oriented wing of the movement. He joined the already active movement and helped give it direction and cohesion as one of its major leaders. And in succeeding generations his writings had increasing influence. Thus it is quite proper that we should focus our attention on his writings and ask whether they still have relevance.

During his own early period of doubt concerning the Lord's Supper, Menno read Luther and other Reformers for help. Eventually, however, he went directly to Scripture, and from then on Scripture, rather than Protestant theology, became his basic guide and authority. He was not a Greek or Hebrew scholar, but he had a thorough knowledge of the Bible. He did not hesitate to interpret it independently from the Lutheran and Reformed scholars. Working together closely with colleagues such as Dirk Philips, he developed a consistent Anabaptist hermeneutic.

Menno was not a systematic theologian, and he repudiated speculation and abstraction. His one major effort in theological definition or Christology was something of a disaster. In contrast to his long, laborious, and ultimately heretical doctrine of the person of Christ, however, his treatment of the Trinity is completely nonspeculative and thoroughly biblical.

Although Menno was not a systematic theologian, he cared deeply about theology, and he held that it was important to be correct as well as sincere in one's beliefs. For him a correct faith was one that grasped the true intention of New Testament Scriptures and led to true repentance and a life of faithful discipleship. In his writings he constantly warned against going beyond Scripture or pressing too far for explanations that are not given in Scripture. He thought of theology as a "gloss," i.e., a marginal note, on the meaning of Scripture and carefully avoided confusing it with the text itself.

Menno represents the biblical center in Anabaptism at its best. He is Christ-centered with a strong emphasis on living out the faith. Where Luther had said, "The just shall live **by faith**," Menno said, "The just shall **live their faith**." He was biblical rather than speculative and analytical in his approach to theology. And he was quite willing to live with mystery rather than press for theological explanations that take one beyond the biblical text. I suggest that in this respect he sets a precedent that fits well the practical mind-set of Japanese culture.

Let me suggest the following as examples of Menno's relevance for twentieth-century Christianity in Japan.

First, his **emphasis on Christ**. I mentioned Menno's heretical explanation of Christ's person, but this heresy was in technical statement only and not in intention or final conclusion. He was thoroughly orthodox in his conviction that Jesus Christ was the God-man. His favorite text was 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

For Menno, the Christ of the Gospels is the final authority for life, not just for the inner spiritual life but for all areas of social and private personal life. Christ is the Prince of Peace, and by peace Menno intends the full scope of biblical *shalom*. He maintained that the *agape* which Jesus commanded is for the social order beginning with the church as a social community. He would not settle for a social ethic of natural law and justice in contrast to a personal ethic of love. This was not optimistic rationalism. He knew full well that in order to live by the command of love one must be willing to "bear the heavy cross of Christ."

When I think of this man who spent most of his adult life hiding from the religious and civil authorities, my mind turns to the "hidden Christians" of seventeenth-century Japan. The memorial to the 26 martyrs who were literally crucified for their faithfulness to Christ at Nagasaki stands as a stark reminder of their heroic faith.

Menno's emphasis on Christ's humanity was to counter the popular conception of him as a magical, divine savior. For him, Jesus is example as well as Savior, the archetype and source of the new humanity—the "second Adam." On the other hand, his insistence on Jesus' deity was also motivated by existential and practical concerns. Was this one who calls us to crucifixion with him really the voice of God? And can he really defeat death? Is he truly the godded man to whom we shall give ultimate authority? Is his salvation truly the salvation of God? These are the existential questions of the martyr-disciple, and they led Menno to emphasize Christ's deity.

Second, Menno's understanding of **faith as submission and obedience to God's will** challenges the still-prevalent notion of faith as a magical or religious wish projection. The prayer of faith is not a wish for good luck or a divining of the future.

Neither is it trust in some mysterious or magical divine intervention that can save us from the effort and suffering involved in a life of obedience to Christ. Faith is faithfulness in following Jesus Christ. True faith expresses itself in commitment to action.

Third, Menno understood **grace as God's gracious activity** in our lives. Roman Catholic theology had thought of grace as a kind of sacramental gift to us restoring "original righteousness" which was lost in Adam's fall. Luther had defined it as God's own gracious nature expressed in forgiving us. Menno viewed it as **God's renewing activity recreating us in the image of God**. Thus his emphasis was on regeneration rather than justification, enablement rather than forgiveness, although, of course, he also believed firmly in the latter.

Menno constantly confessed his own weakness and imperfection. He was aware of the temptation and selfish tendency of his own human nature. Thus his reliance is upon "Christ and Christ alone" as the gracious enabler and reconciler. But God's grace and calling do not cancel out human decision and the necessity of obedience to the covenant commandment of love to God and neighbor. Rather, God's grace is the source of the miraculous possibility of a new life following the pattern of Christ.

Last, Menno's confidence in the **sufficiency and authority of Scripture** for the Christian's life gives us both inspiration and guidance. He was convinced along with Luther and the other Reformers that the central message of the Bible is clear and plain. Many times he repeats, "Scriptures plainly teach. . . ." He felt that our real difficulty is to do what the Scriptures teach. Our problem is not so much intellectual as moral.

Menno lived in the midst of much confusion and argument about the interpretation of Scripture. On the one side were the

violent Anabaptist sects who were using literal Old Testament precedents to justify attempts at military defense, polygamy, and establishing a political kingdom. On the other were the Spiritualists who interpreted the commands of Christ as purely spiritual admonition for the inner life of faith. Then, of course, there were Calvin, who interpreted the Bible as a guide to a theocratic society, and Luther, who made the Christian experience of justification by faith alone the hermeneutical principle.

Formally Menno agreed with Luther that Christ is the center and goal of Scripture, but he understood "Christ" differently from Luther. For him the Christ who had fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures and was the focal point of the New Testament was the historical **Christ of the Gospels**. His words and example of cross and resurrection were Menno's main guide for interpreting the Bible. If a teaching was not consistent with the words and example of Jesus, he most likely rejected it. But if he was convinced that it was indeed the word of Christ or that it gave authentic testimony to him, no theological authority could convince him otherwise. Scripture as a witness to Christ was his "infallible rule" for life.

In these four areas, then, I dare to suggest that Menno is relevant today. We need a Christ who is more than a theological payment for our sin, who is also our pioneer and example. We need a faith that challenges the prevalent superstitious belief in magical solutions—whether it is "Christian" magic or that of some other religion. We need a concept of grace that strengthens the moral fiber of our resolve and enables us truly to follow our Lord. And we need a guide to instruct and direct our way in a turbulent and confusing time when old values are fast losing their authority for us. Menno's faith points us to the one sure foundation, which is Jesus Christ.

In review

Witness of the Third Way: A Fresh Look at Evangelism. Edited by Henry J. Schmidt. Elgin, Ill.: The Brethren Press, 1986, 135 pp., \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by James Wenger

This book makes available 13 articles based on the plenary sessions and workshops of Alive '85, a convocation held in Denver, Colorado, on evangelism and church growth. The contributors are all from the Church of the Brethren, Mennonite, General Conference Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren, and Brethren in Christ churches. One was a guest from a Baptist church.

Myron Augsburger's article sets the tone for the book. He defines witnesses of the third way as those with a radical commitment to be obedient, faithful followers of Jesus Christ. They work for reconciliation and try to allow the message of the gospel to transform any setting. The third way is neither rightist conservative nor leftist secular. It critiques both. This definition of a third way reflects a continuation and development of H. S. Bender's Anabaptist

Vision which has served as an alternative to fundamentalism and liberalism.

The book is divided between the content and context of witnessing. In the first, Frank Tillapaugh calls for the people in our churches to be unleashed for ministry. He says that "authority and responsibility (in the church) must be lodged with those who have a heartbeat for ministry." Other contributors are David Ewert, James Myers, Henry Grinder, and Robert Neff.

The second section seeks to contextualize the third way. Friendship evangelism, according to Art McPhee, is not a method but a way of living authentically in relation to others as Jesus did. Don Jacobs' article calls for peace, evangelism, and social justice. Christine Michael, the lone female contributor, calls for love for people and for the city if we are to be effective in urban evangelism. Other contributors are John Neufeld, Palmer Becker, Henry Schmidt, and Don Yoder.

As shown by recent goal statements by the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church, there appears to be a resurgence of interest in evangelism and

church planting in the believers churches. This book with its short chapters and discussion questions is particularly useful in nurturing that interest through Sunday school classes and other small groups.

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No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions. By Paul F. Knitter. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985, 304 pp., \$14.95 (pb)

Reviewed by David A. Shank

The question mark in the title is indeed the thesis of this book. Simply put, the author

questions whether it is still possible in the "new times" of religious pluralism and the relativity that emerges from historicism to proclaim as an absolute truth the declaration of the apostle Peter to the Sanhedrin: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The specific textual exegesis of the text which overtly questions this "exclusivity and normativity" of Jesus is as follows: "The apostles after having cured the lame man cried out [the declaration] not to rule out the possibility of other saviours but to proclaim that this Lord Jesus was still alive, and that it was he, not they, who was working such wonders in the community. The text, therefore, is abused when used as a starting point for evaluation of other religions." The language, Knitter insists, belongs not to that of philosophy, science, or dogmatics, but to the language of confession and testimony (p. 185).

But the book is indeed much more than a simple textual exegesis. It is most of all an exegesis of a "new time—a *kairós*" as a unique opportunity and responsibility for the Christian church faced with the existential and theological problem of the perseverance and even aggressive renewal of major world religions. It is also a biographical work that represents a personal attempt to arrive at a deeper integrity and commitment in his own Christian faith for Knitter, a former Roman Catholic missionary, now professor of theology at Xavier University.

The methodology for the study is simple: statement of the problem, inductive approach to the solution, a proposed solution as a thesis, a defense of the thesis.

The problem: the world is becoming more and more unified as is revealed through the sciences of philosophy, sociology, psychology, economics, and politics. Yet religions remain; here there is no unity but defensive and offensive pluralism. But this "one world" with its current cultural consciousness is calling for unity in religion; it is a need of this particular contemporary *kairós*. Hence the fundamental background problem: how to get there (one religion for a new one world and its order) from here (where each religion, and Christianity—by definition, insists on its exclusive claims).

The solution: one absolutely essential factor is "authentic dialogue" which requires "real listening"; but this is impossible if Christian tradition is taken as the only or final criterion of religious truth. Hence, the subsidiary problem—which occupies the last two thirds of the volume: how to pull off the theological trick of admitting the relativity of Christ, without lessening his universal significance (L. Gilkey).

The middle section—the "critical survey" of the title—purports to show that neither evan-

gelicals (read K. Barth) with their concept of "one true religion," nor mainline Protestants (Althaus, Brunner, Pannenberg, Braaten, Newbigin, Neill, Devanandan, Thomas) with their concept of "salvation only in Christ," nor even the Roman Catholics and Anglicans as the "mainline Christian model" (Rahner, Vatican II, Küng, Song, Koyama, Cobb, Pittenger, W.C.C., John Paul II) with the concept of "many ways, one norm" can be an adequate answer to this problem of authentic dialogue. But the author notes with relief and satisfaction that a new "theocentric model" of "many ways to the center" (Jesus being one of the ways) is emerging (via Hick, Pannikar, Samartha, T. Driver, Reuther, Hellwig, and theologies of liberation).

The third and last section of the volume explicates, defends, and validates this "new understanding of the Gospel." It shows, in striking contrast with evangelical and mainline Protestant "exclusive uniqueness" and Roman Catholic "inclusive uniqueness," that a "relational uniqueness" of the "theocratic model" is not only possible but necessary for this unique time in religious history. Knitter purports to show that the "non-normative theocentric christology is a valid interpretation of New Testament proclamation and is consistent with current methodology in christology." He explores how to relate this to faith in Jesus' resurrection and illustrates how—in spite of appearances—it demands total commitment along with a distinctive Christian praxis in society and contribution to the new dialogue among religions.

How does Knitter pull it off? He starts with a theocentric perspective of Jesus and claims with the help of historical criticism that a high Christology was only a late result of evolution in context. What was that context requiring decontextualization (so that we can pursue a Christological evolution in our context of one world/many religions), the too simple either/or categories of classicist culture, the apocalyptic/eschatological mentality of Judaism, and the sociological perspective of "survival"? This contextual conditioning of Christology plus the witness/confessional character of language (like that of husband for wife) helps to understand why today—in this *kairós*—the same language is totally inappropriate.

Further, since it is possible for the author—following process theology—to take the "myth of the incarnation" seriously without taking it literally, he can also admit the possibility of other such "incarnations" each as a part of a larger truth than Jesus. Beyond that, if one works from the praxis of the church—the only valid criterion for liberation theology—one must admit that the finality of Jesus in the fulfillment of the kingdom has not been ob-

servable.

But what about the resurrection of Jesus, that singularly exclusive and foundational event of New Testament Christology? The author is committed to a richly mythic account—recognized as controversial but reputable—of deeply personal-communitarian experience and commitment. This then opens up the possibility, for example, of a parallel community experience of Buddha in Mahayana Buddhism. And the author assures that such an interpretation makes "it possible for Christians to follow the lead of *kairós* today" by endorsing a theocentric theology of religions based on a theocentric, non-normative reinterpretation of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

This is an important study and a serious piece of academic work following scientific methodology. And the author knows the literature. He gives a good analysis of the currents that have contributed to the contemporary "cultural consciousness" which requires one religion. The critical survey of different Christian responses to pluralism can be extremely useful. But it is also important, if only for showing the theological gymnastics required for recuperating some worldwide relevance for Jesus for those boxed into the relativities of historicism and pluralism. For example, it might be helpful for my European theologian-friend who is working at the question of "what—that is essential—is left after Jesus is no longer relevant."

But, as is obvious from the reporting above, the proposal leaves us with another Jesus, another Christ, another God, another gospel, another church, and another religion, albeit potentially the one religion of the one world order at our doorstep. The author himself makes this clear. He even calls for an act of religious faith: a dying to the old gospel in order to move into the fuller life of the new gospel. Each reader will evaluate this new Christological option from the perspective of personal faith and experience having been advised ahead of time of its consequences.

In his discussion of the "kingdom of God" it is clear that the author insists that Jesus be seen only as a candidate for Lord of the kingdom. Thus it is also logically significant that at a time when an awareness of the universal work of the Holy Spirit is seen to be fulfilling the *missio dei* this missiological study gives it no attention. That is logical, since for the apostles the Spirit's mission was to witness to Jesus; from the author's perspective the universal mission of the Holy Spirit would be only an ambiguous possibility.

From the perspective of the confessing free church, one is also pushed to ask what the attitude of the one religion would be toward

those who persevered in proclaiming the classicist, eschatological/apocalyptic confession of the apostles, witnesses to the resurrected Lord and the scandal of his cross in all of its once-for-all particularity. After all, what can be more tyrannical than a cultural consciousness structured by religion. In reality, by raising the original problem of how to discover a way to have one religion for a one-world political and economic unity, the author is still waving the triumphalist flag, even though he overtly judges Christianity for its arrogance, aggressivity, and its imperial dimension seen to be inherent in its "one-way" claims.

But despite appearances, this deep structure seems not only to remain but to be more offensive because of its subtlety. Indeed, the author does not doubt that if his proposal met the consensus of the faithful, "they can expect to witness a growth or evolution such as the church has not experienced since its first centuries." For him it is a classic either/or situation: "To miss this opportunity would mean to put the light of the gospel under a bushel basket and to make the good news more difficult to believe."

The first line of the author's preface reads, "All theology we are told is rooted in biography." One senses throughout the book his preoccupation with the fact that the exclusive and normative uniqueness of Jesus Christ has been *imposed*. One can sympathize with that concern when one recalls that he has evolved within a dominating tradition that has only within the past 20 years turned officially away from imposing faith in a unique, exclusive, and normative institution, thus—by definition—distorting praxis and witness to Jesus Christ who witnessed by *offering* himself. The author, in his understandable reaction, jumps over the original option of the apostles of confession and witness—presenting the claims of Christ in freedom through faith and life and word, without any thought of imposition, but in trust that he would use that offer in his own way to fulfill his purposes for all peoples.

Of course, if all authority in heaven and earth has not been given to Christ, one might feel called to work out another way—another gospel. Dr. Knitter, insisting upon agnosticism at this point and pressured by the reality of this *kairós*, believes it can be done and illustrates, thus providing the rest of us—committed to confession and testimony rather than to philosophy, science, or dogmatics—with an excellent foil.

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Third World Liberation Theologies: An Introductory Survey. By Deane W. Ferm. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986, 145 pp., \$10.95 (pb)

Third World Liberation Theologies: A Reader. By Deane W. Ferm. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986, 386 pp., \$16.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Raymond Peter Harms-Wiebe

Third World Liberation Theologies: An Introductory Survey is a valuable introduction to a growing body of literature emerging out of the daily experiences of those who suffer with the poor and the powerless in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Deane William Ferm's primary purpose is "to survey the various manifestations of liberation theology throughout the Third World" (p. 1).

His major goals are explicitly stated: (1) "to show that Third World liberation theology is not monolithic," and (2) to "encourage readers to dig more deeply into this fascinating theological area" (p. 2). By focusing on leading theologians (Gustavo Gutierrez, Allan Boesak, Kosuke Koyama) and lesser known liberation thinkers (Beatrice Melano Couch, Charles Nyamiti, Aloysius Pieris), Ferm accomplishes both his purpose and his goals.

Ferm carefully provides the historical context in which third-world theologians should be read and understood and then proceeds to articulate incisively the major themes and emphases of both particular continents and individual writers. He successfully demonstrates that Latin-American liberation theology is no more the progenitor of African and Asian liberation theologies than European political theology is the forerunner of Latin-American liberation theology. While Latin-American liberation theologians focus on social and political oppression, Africans concentrate on racism and Asians on religious oppression.

Ferm rightfully suggests that all three groups are remiss in neglecting sexism as a blatant form of oppression. He fails, however, to note that liberation theologians also tend to overlook demonic forces, apart from their involvement in social and political structures, as real and oppressive powers in much of the third world.

In his final chapter, Ferm points out with clarity the errors and superficialities of some of liberation theology's foremost conservative critics. He may, however, go beyond his original intent when he expresses his impatience with the apparent narrowmindedness of some first-world theologians ("Why should we not join forces with all persons of good will who seek for a world of justice and freedom for all? Let us demythologize the Marx question once

and for all!" (p. 41). "To opt for the poor does not mean to opt for Marx. How can this be made clear to the critics?" (p. 113).

Ferm's assessment of conservative criticism is appropriate, but his rather forceful response to first-world capitalists moves his work beyond an introductory survey to being a North American apologetic for liberation theology and democratic socialism. A survey should allow its readers to encounter a body of literature and be stimulated to consider its import further on the basis of the literature's own fascinating value. Nevertheless, Ferm's work does remain a most valuable introduction to third-world liberation theology and is recommended reading for all who desire to listen to, and learn from, their third-world brothers and sisters.

It must be added that Ferm's companion volume *Third World Liberation Theologies: A Reader* does allow the Latin Americans, Africans, and Asians to speak for themselves. Well-documented references and a select bibliography also direct the interested reader to further writings in this significant and creative field of theological ferment.

Raymond Peter Harms-Wiebe is a missionary with Mennonite Brethren Missions and Services to Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Tell Us Our Names: Story Theology from an Asian Perspective. By C. S. Song. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984, 210 pp., \$10.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Robert L. Ramseyer

C. S. Song, formerly principal of the Tainan Theological College, Taiwan, is currently coordinator of study for the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and professor of theology in the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology. In previous books Song has demonstrated his ability as a clear articulator of a way of doing theology which does not have its roots in Western civilization. *Tell Us Our Names* is a collection of ten papers, each one built around a folk or children's story, which continue his reflections on theology in the context of the people of nations in different cultural traditions.

In chapters of particular interest to readers of *Mission Focus*, Song wrestles with two familiar issues.

1. What has been God's relationship to the history and culture of peoples outside the Judeo-Christian cultural tradition?

2. What is the relationship of Christians to

people who are believers in other religious traditions?

Chapter six, "Tattooed Christian Mission," illustrates Song's response to these questions and also his methodology throughout the book. The chapter begins with a Maori folk tale about a young man who fell in love with a woman from the netherworld. In the process of losing and then winning her again he discovers that he will need to be tattooed in ways that cut deeply into the skin and are painful. Only a love which can move him to give himself in this way can bridge the gulf between their two worlds. Song then discusses the difference between a "truth affair" and a "love affair." The gospel story is not a matter of truth—which must continually draw lines between the false and the true—but a matter of love which can unite even that which it is impossible to unite. Mission has far too long been a matter of truth rather than a love affair.

God is love, and love does not make persons into principles. It does not treat them as corollaries of missionary propositions. Above all, it does not divide persons into the "reached" and the "unreached." The whole of creation is the arena of God's love. To claim that some persons—in fact the majority of the human race—are not reached by God is to question if not deny, the power of God's love that upholds the world. . . . Christian mission in essence should be a love affair of the church with other human beings with whom God has already fallen in love (p. 108).

Trained in the West, I find myself as yet unable to set aside issues of truth as Song would have us do. At the same time, it is undoubtedly true that while I have tried to follow God with both head and heart, when the going gets rough in mission I have usually opted for truth rather than an all-giving love in making difficult mission decisions.

Readers of *Mission Focus* will find a great deal in the thought of C. S. Song with which they cannot agree. However, all of us would do well to be stimulated by the way in which he forces us to reexamine some of our basic ways of thinking, asking again questions about how faith, hope, and love may look in a different cultural tradition. We need the stimulus of C. S. Song, and these ten chapters are a good place to begin.

Robert L. Ramseyer is director of the Mission Training Center and professor of missions and anthropology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana. He has served in Japan with the General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Overseas Mission.

American Evangelical Missionaries in France, 1945-1975. By Allen V. Koop. Lanham and London: University Press of America, 1986, 207 pp., \$27.00 (\$13.50, pb)

Reviewed by Neal Blough

This book relates the history of American evangelical mission efforts in contemporary France from 1945, when expatriate workers were few and far between, to 1975, when missionaries numbered in the hundreds and budgets had soared correspondingly.

Prefaced by the immediate postwar years, this history is divided into three periods. The first wave dated between 1950 and 1955. These years saw the arrival of the Greater Europe Mission, Baptist Mid-Missions, the Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM), as well as Mennonite Board of Missions. From the beginning, there was little or no coordination of activities among the various groups. These activities included the founding of several Bible schools, literature distribution, rallies, and youth work.

The second period, the decade between 1955-1965, is characterized by Koop as a "search for strategy." In the early years, most missionaries held to optimistic expectations about the reevangelization of France. Sparse results led quickly to discouragement and thus to a reevaluation of goals. In a secularized, culturally sophisticated, historically Catholic, and sometimes anti-American country, these missionaries found the French evangelicals (over against the French Reformed Church) to be the most natural allies. However, collaboration with these small and dispersed groups was not always easy. Several missions decided to go their own ways, beginning new churches and even new denominations from scratch. A few groups chose to work with already existing churches. In any case, by the 1960s, after years of what Koop describes as "aimless activity," most mission activity in France was geared to the establishment of new churches.

The third decade saw an increase in workers, both from already present boards as well as from new agencies sending people for the first time. Donald McGavran's Church Growth theory provided a rationale for church-planting efforts while at the same time raising questions about the utility of work in France, mainly because of the lack of receptivity among the French population. Several problems seemed to recur in the various uncoordinated church-planting efforts. The few rare conversions that did occur often failed to lead to church membership; therefore much "growth" was "transfer growth," people moving from one group to another. Most new churches also found themselves with a core group of third-world immigrants rather than French people.

While apparently sympathetic to American evangelical mission work, Koop does not hesitate to offer some rather pointed criticism of the entire endeavor.

One important conclusion is that when compared statistically to other mission efforts, work in France has been a relative failure. "... It is crucial to remember that much of the story of what happened in the course of missionary activity in France lies in what failed to happen. Discouragement and failure became common, success a rare pleasure" (p. 130).

Many of Koop's remarks are quite to the point. Many missionaries who came to France had little understanding of the country they came to evangelize. The crucial question of French cultural, intellectual, and church history and the ensuing secularization process was ignored. Koop also claims that relatively few missionaries succeeded in adapting to French culture and that many of them never really learned the French language well. The evangelical mission thrust is also heavily faulted for its sectarian approach, i.e., for ignoring the fact that Christianity existed in France for more than a thousand years before the founding of the USA. Theological presuppositions did not allow missionaries to take either Roman Catholic or mainline Protestant churches seriously. In many cases, even the relations with the most natural allies, French evangelicals, were strained.

Koop claims that many mistakes could have been avoided if American evangelicals had from the beginning associated with the French Reformed Church because of its historically recognized place within French society. This is an interesting hypothesis, but it suffers from several weaknesses. First of all, as the author himself admits, the theology of the evangelicals would not allow such an approach. To have done so would have meant that they were no longer "evangelical." Second, this approach means that missionaries would have had to ignore the sentiments of the French evangelicals, who have many of the same questions as their American counterparts in relation to the Reformed Church.

A more realistic approach would be to adopt an even more cooperative stance with French evangelicals. A more creative approach, which would be criticized by many evangelicals, would be the attempt to build bridges between the different groups (evangelicals, conciliar Protestants, and Roman Catholics). There are people in all these groups who want to work more closely together, and there is no good reason not to move in this direction.

American evangelical presence has increased significantly since 1975. It has even been said that there are presently more American missionaries in France than French Reformed pastors. Many of the problems al-

luded to in this book are still real. Thus, Koop's study is quite important and offers much insight to those who are willing to take a self-critical look at themselves.

Neal Blough has served since 1975 in France with Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana.

The Revolutionary Bishop: Who Saw God at Work in Africa. By Ralph E. Dodge. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1986, 205 pp., \$7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Harold W. Fehderau

After more than forty years in Africa, Bishop Ralph E. Dodge was expelled by the white-dominated government of Southern Rhodesia. The book traces the event-filled life of this missionary who was a revolutionary in spite of himself.

His early upbringing on a remote Iowa farm and his innate shyness would not seem to be the background and character trait needed for a demanding ministry in the heart of Africa. Yet he was a courageous nonconformist in his approach to his task and in his relations with Africans.

In an age when missionaries led all aspects of church work, Dodge recognized that indigenous people should be trained to do the work. From the beginning of his career in 1936, he consciously treated his African church colleagues as peers. A typical example: while white people normally took food supplies and their own cook on trips to rural areas, Dodge treated the villagers with dignity by accepting their hospitality and reciprocated when they came to the city.

Even though the author can describe only a few of his many trying and gratifying experiences in such a short book, the reader will gain an insight into the everyday life of an active missionary and feel a bit of the political and social ferment in Africa as the colonial era was drawing to a close.

Dodge is the author of the well-known book written in 1964, *The Unpopular Missionary*, which describes the struggle of the emerging indigenous church. The book under review here gives a helpful additional personal perspective on that issue.

Harold W. Fehderau, Waterloo, Ontario, serves as a translations coordinator for United Bible Societies.

Cherubim and Seraphim: The History of an African Independent Church. By J. Akinyele Omoyajowo. New York/Lagos: NOK Publishers International, Ltd., 1982, 256 pp., \$21.50 (\$8.95, pb)

Reviewed by James R. Krabill

There are three leading movements in the Aladura family of African Independent Churches found largely among the Yoruba people of Western Nigeria. Dr. H. W. Turner published a two-volume description of one of these, *The Church of the Lord*, in 1967; the other two movements, *The Cherubim and Seraphim* (C&S) and the Apostolic group of churches, were analyzed in a combined study the following year by J. D. Y. Peel. J. Akinyele Omoyajowo—himself a Yoruba professor, civil servant, and committed churchman—has now done us the favor of isolating the Cherubim and Seraphim as a distinct movement worthy of more in-depth scrutiny.

Omoyajowo's work, written in an easy-flowing, nontechnical style, is divided into two parts. The first is historical and traces in four chapters the early history of the movement, placing special emphasis on the lives of its founders (Moses Orimolade and Christianah Abiodun Akinsowon), the church's early growth and expansion ("... most Yoruba Christians [in mission-founded churches] possessed only a veneer of Christianity ... Orimolade's heaven-based Society was seen by [many] as the kind of supplement they required to strengthen their faith," pp. 47-48) and an examination of the numerous schisms which erupted within the C&S movement during the first nine years of its existence (1925-1934).

Part II (seven chapters) of the book deals, then, with the church's theology (doctrines of God, church, salvation, angelology), phenomenology (manifestations of the Spirit [visions, trances, dreams], liturgical practices, and healing ministry), and structural features (administration, position of women, finances). Nine photos, two maps, and two diagrams give life to the written text. The book's ten-page bibliography includes both oral and numerous heretofore unpublished written documents as well as a discussion of how the author collected and used such materials in his research.

A few features left this reviewer less than fully satisfied:

1. The book is a revised version of research completed in the late 1960s for the author's 1971 doctoral thesis. The publishers held the manuscript nearly ten years after accepting it before releasing the book in final form. Anyone in contact with the C&S Society in the 1980s will sense a certain out-of-date feel about the work.

2. No reference is made (perhaps partly for the above reason) to C&S churches outside of Yorubaland in Imo, Anambra, and Rivers States, not to mention those in Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and several in England. Such an investigation would deeply enrich the present study.

3. In an attempt to cover the theology some sections turn out a bit superficial and underdeveloped (e.g., the C&S "Doctrine of the Church" treats only the movement's view of the church building and nothing of the church as people).

4. The author in his zeal to demonstrate the orthodoxy of the movement occasionally bounces C&S beliefs off Barth, Berkhof, Rahner, Van Dusen, and others in somewhat awkward ways.

Finally, up to twenty corrections should be cleared up in future editions of this work, some typographical (e.g., Hotonu, for Hutonu [p. 85]; Idowu, for Idow [p. 230]; psychical, for physical [at two places in quoting Turner, p. 180]), and some of a more substantive nature (e.g., where the 10 Hotonu group is diagrammed as splitting off of the Praying Band instead of Onanuga's Mt. Zion group, [p. 85]).

These remarks are not intended to detract from what we owe to Omoyajowo in assisting an important African church, through its own oral and written sources, to "speak for itself," and in so doing, to remind the rest of us that "Christians in Africa deserve every opportunity to worship God, not as Europeans, but as Africans—in their singing, in their praying and in all their religious sensitivity" (p. 226).

James R. Krabill serves with Mennonite Board of Missions in Ivory Coast as a Bible teacher among African Independent Churches (the Harrist Church in particular but also with the local chapter of Cherubim and Seraphim).

Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam. By Phil Parshall. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983, 163 pp., \$6.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Gordon Nickel

This book could more accurately be titled *Bridges to Sufi Islam in South Asia*, and as such it is a helpful introduction. Phil Parshall's main point is that popular or folk Islam is rather different from orthodox Islam and that it offers a number of landings on which bridges from Christianity can be established.

Parshall, a missionary to Bangladesh, de-

scribes Sufi Islam as a movement which emphasizes the activities of the inner self. The chapters on Sufi history and belief read a bit like a term paper, with many long, uninterpreted quotes. At the same time, the frequent use of the writings of South Asian scholars, among them Muslims, is commendable.

The book really comes to life whenever Parshall tells of first-person experiences. He writes about Islam with respect, acknowledging a sincere search for God among Muslims. He pleads with missionaries to distinguish the essentials of Christian faith from Western cultural expressions and to be creative in presenting Christianity to Muslims in ways appropriate to their cultures.

The chapter I enjoyed most was the final one on "Bridges to Mystical Islam." Parshall helpfully contrasts how Western missionaries and Muslim priests appear to South Asians. This chapter provides some key insights on meeting Muslims at their points of "felt need." Here Parshall could have made more of the authority of Jesus as teacher, since the "pir" plays such a large role in folk Islam. He also could have expanded on the place of the local church in meeting the "shame of not being in the group."

As a missionary-in-training for an evangelism and church-planting assignment in Pakistan, I found *Bridges to Islam* to be encouraging. Phil Parshall's respect and love for folk Muslims and his deep desire to reach them with the gospel are infectious.

Gordon Nickel is a student at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Christianity in Today's World: An Eerdmans Handbook. Edited by Robin Keeley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985, 380 pp., \$29.95

Reviewed by Peter Fast

This pleasing pictorial handbook is the sixth in a series of Eerdmans Handbooks noted for the creative and colorful ways with which the material is presented. *Christianity in Today's World* is no exception. The book consists of a series of articles, some shorter (one page) and some longer (twelve-thirteen pages), with many brief relevant excerpts throughout. Included are over 200 exceptionally well-reproduced photographs (mostly in color) and 25 diagrams and maps which clearly—and often in an arresting way—illustrate statistically,

geographically, and thematically important points in the book.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one, after a brief twenty-page statement describing the contemporary scene, treats concisely the major Christian communions (five or six pages for each) in the world today as well as some newer movements (charismatics, ecumenicity). Part two moves from the confessional description of different communions to a portrayal of Christians in their diverse regional locations, continent by continent. And the third part charts the way Christians have done their theological, missionary, and practical tasks.

It is indeed helpful to see the Christian faith as a worldwide religion in all its confessional and regional diversity. Given the limitations of space, the authors have succeeded remarkably well in their formidable tasks. Christianity in Africa is discussed and illustrated in fifteen pages! Such severe limitation creates its own problems. Thus the Kimbanguist movement is mentioned only in passing and that only three times.

Limitations are also apparent in terms of perspective. The 63 contributors are mostly all Western, Protestant, and male, representing largely the conservative, evangelical wing of Christianity and presenting the material in such nuanced ways. The book contains a predominantly Western flavor, especially so in Part III which treats issues and problems determined to a large extent by a Western agenda in a Western way.

The major strength of the book is that it enables readers to see global Christianity in a nutshell. The authors present a contemporary view of the Christian faith with all its multiplicity and diversity. They are aware of the many problems and issues facing the Christian. Yet throughout, a spirit of optimism prevails. This is particularly true about the many photographs which show Christians everywhere as healthy, happy, well-dressed, and well-fed people.

The articles are of uneven quality. They do, however, exhibit a striking degree of stylistic unity. Here and there errors have crept into the text. (E.g., p. 179: The first united church in the world did not happen in Asia. The United Church of Canada came into being in 1925, the Church of South India only in 1947.) And one could quibble about perspectives and weighting of articles and issues. On the whole, Eerdmans has again put before the public a readable, informative, and exceptionally well-produced book—and at a reasonable price.

Peter Fast teaches at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Jonathan Goforth. By Rosalind Goforth. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1986, 157 pp., \$3.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Gerhard Pfeil

At the age of twelve Rosalind Goforth came to know the Lord and found complete assurance of faith.

At nineteen Rosalind began to pray that if the Lord wanted her to marry, he would lead her to a man wholly given up to him and to his service. She wanted no other. Soon afterwards she became acquainted with Jonathan Goforth, a young city missionary from Toronto. Both were determined to serve the Lord as a missionary couple in China.

Before they got married, Jonathan asked Rosalind, "Will you give me your promise that always you will allow me to put my Lord and His work first, even before you?" Rosalind gave an inward gasp before replying, "Yes, I will, always," for this was the kind of man for whom she had prayed.

In 1888 they traveled together to China where they began to study the language and to witness for the Lord.

During the Boxer Rebellion all the foreigners were in danger of being killed. At that time the Goforths endured incredible hardship from some Chinese revolutionaries and barely escaped with their lives. However, not giving up, Jonathan and Rosalind continued their work on their knees. They had no clue that the most fertile and productive time for their ministry was still to come.

At the age of 45, Jonathan intensively searched the Bible for how he might find a greater power for a more effective ministry. Finney's lectures on revival and pamphlets on the Welsh revival were also instrumental in changing their lives and ministry. This resulted in a breakthrough, and a great revival movement began in which they served for 35 years. This spiritual awakening rarely has been equaled in the history of modern missions. This inspirational biography brings out the human and supernatural aspect of a mighty work of God.

The lives of Jonathan and Rosalind Goforth can truly be an incentive and important tool in reviving the missionary zeal within the hearts of today's readers.

Gerhard Pfeil is a student at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California. He earlier was a Bible school teacher in Switzerland.

Mission Focus Index

In Word and in Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility. Edited by Bruce J. Nicholls and Kenneth Kantzer. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, 238 pp., \$10.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Art DeFehr

This book consists of the edited versions of eight papers presented to the 1982 Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism and the World Evangelical Fellowship were cosponsors.

The papers are well written but lack a uniform style. The historical analysis is thorough and readable, but some of the theological concerns are dissected to the point of tedium. Although one expects the authors to deal kindly with their sponsors, the delicacy with which their official positions are handled is in somewhat uncomfortable contrast to the merciless critique of the WCC.

The preface states that "... it was relatively easy to reach a consensus on the primacy of evangelism," but after this obeisance in the direction of their sponsors, the authors dedicate much of the book toward the task of nudging the cause of social responsibility as close to equality as possible.

The authors lament the loss of the "social gospel" territory to the liberal camp. Those from the Anabaptist tradition should read the book with the recognition that the blend of social concern and evangelism has been historically practiced and assumed by our church. It would be regrettable to join a battle which has already been won.

The eight papers were written by theologians for theologians as reflected by the 370 footnotes. Although the arguments are well stated, the book lacks the credibility of the practitioner who must venture into the crucible of reality. One of the most useful insights is the concept of vocation or gifts as a determinant of the appropriateness of evangelism or social action for an individual. The book may be helpful in understanding the arguments and their origins, but we look elsewhere for the answers.

Art DeFehr is president of Palliser Furniture, Ltd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, and chairman of MEDA Manitoba (Mennonite Economic Development Associates). He earlier served with Mennonite Central Committee in Bangladesh.

Volume 14 (1986)

This index is divided into two main categories: (A) General Missions and (B) Area Studies. Each article is listed by author, title, and *Mission Focus* volume number and issue. In addition, each entry is assigned a number in *italic* for ease in cross-referencing. Please note that this index continues the indexes for volumes 1-10 found in the December 1982 issue, for volume 11 found in the December 1983 issue, for volume 12 found in the December 1984 issue, and for volume 13 found in the December 1985 issue of *Mission Focus*.

A. GENERAL MISSIONS

HISTORY AND THEOLOGY OF MISSION

Mission in the Bible

- DETWEILER, Richard C. The Biblical Mandate for Theology of Presence; 14:3. 151.
NYCE, Dorothy Yoder. Partnership: Focus of Early Church Mission; 14:2. 152.
SHENK, Calvin E. Conversion in Acts: Implications for Witness to Religions; 14:1. 153.

History of Mission

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Editorial

The theme crops up in all sorts of places. It is the *leitmotif* running through much contemporary literature and social commentary. It is both a personal and a social phenomenon. Entire societies are said to be suffering from it. We refer to the crisis of identity.

Christians must take the matter of identity seriously. Especially the evangelical tradition has emphasized the importance of personal crisis and conversion as the route by which the individual experiences the new birth of faith in Jesus Christ. This involves the shedding of one identity and the taking on of another.

In the heyday of the eighteenth-century revival, conversion was understood and defined within the cultural forms of Western culture and spirituality. No one had as yet begun to study the wider sociocultural dimensions of this process. The important comparative studies of cultures by anthropologists and sociologists were still in the future. By the mid-1800s missionary leaders began speaking of the importance of indigenizing the gospel; and a century later focus shifted to contextualization as the pressing requirement for effective communication of the Christian message.

This movement from uncritical ethnocentrism to concern for a presentation of the gospel that each person can receive in their own idiom has not happened in isolation. The peoples of the world have lived through a period of rapid change. Week in and week out one can read news reports and articles which reflect this preoccupation—from a variety of angles. The October 1986 *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* reports on "Identity Crisis in Taiwan." The article begins: "What does it mean to be Chinese? Many young people in Taiwan are asking themselves—and their churches—whether they can be both Christian and Chinese." One of the perplexing problems facing Israelis today is how to determine who is a Jew. Numerous other examples can be cited.

I submit that we have a compelling need to rethink the meaning of conversion in the light of the formation of identity. Many of us are stuck with the more limited understanding which we inherited from the revivalist tradition. It has been pointed out how easily we have used that grid to read the New Testament so that we have imposed on the text a particular conversion formula. Let us not lose sight of the fundamental importance of personal transformation through encounter with Jesus Christ; but let us also not be guilty of limiting what Scripture would teach us.

A key phrase in the Epistles is "in Christ." Romans 3:24 describes how we sinners are graciously put right with God "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." Paul gives classic expression to the meaning of conversion in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." Those who are "in

Christ" have turned away from the old order—this world—and now live within God's order.

We need to explore what this will mean in at least three areas. First, what does "being in Christ" mean in terms of **personality**? One of the pitfalls which all missionaries must be aware of is the temptation to suggest patterns or forms of behavior which they believe faithfully express what it means to be "in Christ" without understanding how culturally laden such forms or patterns may be. At the same time, New Testament examples and contemporary experience confirm that those who have experienced spiritual renewal and transformation through the work of Christ are marked by changed behavior and a new quality of life. Conversion may be dated from the time when the individual consciously says yes to the call of Jesus; but conversion is also a lifelong pilgrimage of discovering the mind of Christ and allowing the will of God to be worked out in individual experience.

Second, what does "being in Christ" mean in terms of **society**? Each individual is part of a larger community. Indeed, each person is the product of a particular culture and, in turn, bears responsibility to contribute constructively to the community. We may go even further and suggest that those who are "in Christ" feel an even greater burden for the welfare of their own communities as well as the world. Every culture is a vehicle through which the gospel can be communicated; every culture deserves to be respected and improved. Conversion therefore raises a set of questions concerning how the person who is now "in Christ" behaves in society differently from those who are not in Christ.

The third dimension is that of **history**. What part of one's past does one carry along into Christ's new order? Does our pre-Christian history drop away? Is that past of no value? Or can that past be transformed? This dimension is obviously closely intertwined with that of culture. One of the issues which continues to come up in Africa and Asia is that of the relationship between the departed ancestors and the living. There is evidence that in European society vestiges of primal religion continue to exert power in people's lives a millennium after their supposed conversion. Related to this question of the past is what we do with the history of the church when so much of that history is Western and marred by factions and divisions. How serviceable is that history for Asians or Africans or Latin Americans? Are there parts of it which ought to be pitched out simply because they have no continuing missionary usefulness?

The goal of conversion must be the forging of a new identity "in Christ." That identity is comprised of the three dimensions listed above. Too many Christians today feel torn between competing loyalties. We need to find new ways of looking at what it means to be converted and find our identity "in Christ."—Wilbert R. Shenk